PATHWAY TO GOD

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Prayer to Lord Rudra Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

चमक अनुवाक दुसरा

Second Chamak Chapter

ज्यैष्ठ्यं च म आधिपत्यं च मे मन्युश्च मे
भामश्च मेऽमश्च मेऽम्भश्च मे जेमा च मे महिमा
च मे वरिमा च मे प्रथिमा च मे वर्ष्मा च मे
द्राघुया च मे वृध्दं च मे वृद्धिश्च मे सत्यं च मे
श्रद्धा चं मे जगश्च मे धनं च मे वशश्च मे
त्विषिश्च मे क्रीडा च मे मोदश्च मे जातं च
मे जनिष्यमाणं च मे सूक्तं च मे सुकृतं च मे
वित्तं च मे वेद्यं च मे भूतं च मे भविष्यच्च मे
सुगं च मे सुपथं च म ऋद्धं च म ऋद्धिश्च
मे क्लृप्तं च मे क्लृप्तिश्च मे मतिश्च मे
सुमतिश्च मे ॥२॥

Let the Seniority be mine, let the authority be mine, let the indignation be mine, let the brightness be mine, let the followers be mine, let the cool drinking water be mine, let the eatables be mine, let the greatness be mine, let the excellence be mine, let the fame he mine, let my family be big, let my farm be wide, let my life be long, let my growth (prosperity) be all round, let the truth be mine, let the faith be mine, let the world be mine, let the brilliance be mine, let the activities be mine, let the delight be mine, Let that produced as well as that to be produced be mine, let that which is known be mine as well as that yet to be known be mine, let the past as well as the future be mine. Let the visitable places as well as the good paths be mine let the things grown as well as growing be mine, let those imagined as well as to be imagined be mine. Let the reasoning power be mine; let the intelligence be mine.

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"Trailing clouds of glory do we come to God who is our home." A devotee is like a child in the womb of the mother. Though it is not able to look at the mother, she takes care of it in every way. The Jnani might be compared to a grown -up child who has to go about in the world, without the mother's constant attention. Likewise does God treat a Jnani and let him face on his own the trials and tribulations of the life. He is to cross the sea of life by self-effort, whether he gets a raft or not. When he realises that his efforts are of no avail in this stupendous task, he wishes he were a devotee so that the whole responsibility of saving him falls on God.

◆

After all mirales happen, they are not performed. They happen when God's Grace descends. Grace is to be received and is not to be handed over by one man to another. If the slightest idea of handing over Grace to another enters a man's mind he becomes possessed by egoism. This is in fact an encroachment on the field which properly belongs to God. Real saints, therefore, never perform miracles. It is however true that some miracles do take place through the saints even without their knowledge.

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Thus Spake Gurudeo...

Question by a Sadhaka : To whom the Name could be imparted? Gurudeo's answer : Man is to awaken himself to the consciousness and presence of God. Shri Maharaj bestowed illumination on us by showing us the proper path. What the disciple has achieved is due to the proper guidance of the spiritual teacher. It is in this sense that the disciple owes his illumination to his spiritual teacher. There is no meaning in the passage of the magnetic influence from one to the other, Hence it is not the physical hand but the spiritual hand that is working. This is what is meant by touch. That is all.

Sadhaka : What does mere physical touch of the spiritual teacher do?

Gurudeo : One has to work for one's own upliftment. Really speaking, there is no reason why one should take on oneself the burden of initiating others. The spiritual teacher after he has achieved the goal of his life is concerned with the betterment of the world. He relieves the oppressed from the sorrows of existence. Shri Maharaj in his graciousness gave the mandate and the power to save some at least, and thus to bring light into the life of some. We have, however, to look to the fitness of the disciple.

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EDITORIAL

Present Generation and the spiritual evolution of the Human Being

There was a time when religious leaders, social stalwarts and learned philosophers used to lead the civilizations and societies and mould human lives. The rule of law and management of wealth was left to the monarchs, kings and traders. So it was with Greek, Roman, Indian and Chinese civilizations when learned men and philosophers moulded human lives with morality, ethics, altruism, the progress of arts and sciences, as the base for prosperity of various societies and people. There were battles, wars and revolutions, but after a lapse of time, the society used to settle down to the usual human affairs, may be with some changes of attitudes towards life.

World war I (1914-18) and world war II (1939-45) saw changes that were far-reaching in their effects on the affairs of the societies and the world. The world war I saw the rise of capitalism, socialism and communism as separate systems of governance while world war II and the period following it saw the great leap of progress in science and technology which has affected the life of man all over the world. The progress of air travel cut down the distance to hours and minutes from months and days with safellites, space voyagers, television and the present information technology, the contact distances from place to place anywhere in the world came down to seconds and minutes. The welfare of various scieties in different countries with their economies and industries inevitably got interlinked.

Globalisation and outsourcing of national employment and activities became the talk of the hour and bringing uniform business ethics all over the world for smooth and efficient business an assertive plan of the United Nations.

The atomic, subatomic, molecular, space sciences and technologies not only brought man nearer to mastery and manipulation of the processes of nature, environment and the cosmos, but gave him power of great devastation in case of wars. The fall-out of this great leap of science, economics and technology is already experienced in the misuse of drugs, smuggling, terrorism and enormous wealth generated in the processes. The evils have grown into international network of rackets difficult to be tackled in a localised manner though endangering the lives of peaceful law-abiding citizens in menacing proportions.

In these circumstances, which pervade the whole world, where do we stand with our culture, values, heritage and philosophy of life that have come down to us from the sages since thousands of years? All these things more or less remained undamaged till we got independence. The rulers did not interfere in them for fear of their rule being overthrown. Our people who were mostly family minded rarely raised themselves to national unity level to trouble the rulers, but calmly followed their culture and customs undisturbed. English was introduced in the education but the teaching of Sanskrit was left undisturbed. After independence the one or two generations who had fought for freedom of the country, could keep the values, heritage and culture in tact. But afterwards hell broke loose. There are more or less no leaders who can he called role models in values for the common man. Most of the political leaders go for power and pelf and of course the number game in the parliament to get elected being the main aim. Nobody has time to think or look after the heritage, culture & values with a view for its preservation. It should be noted that it was our own educationists who removed Sanskrit langange more or less from all the schools, though every year many persons from western & eastern countries come to Varanasi to learn Sanskrit from Pundits as they know the importance of the language for knowing the real knowledge from our ancient literature coming down from the sages. As far as the values like honesty, sincerity, responsibility, accountability etc, we stand around 70th in the comity of nations as assessed by the institution of transperancy international. In corruption and delay we are probably 3rd or 4th. With this dismal picture, spiritual progress on a large scale in our country does not seem probable, especially because the individuals are highly family minded and are unable to raise themselves to the high national or divine levels, releasing themselves from the family and worldly tantacles. The individual has to understand that he has two aspects of life the inward and the outward, the real and the apparent i.e. the mind and the body. The mind is the driver and the body the vehicle. The mind is to be trained for wisdom and discrimination so that the bodily affinities are kept in check. In such a case, the individual progresses in spirituality when it is other way round, the bodily affinities become supreme and refuse to be ruled by the mind, the individual is then deeply immersed in materialistic temptations and goes farther and farther away from spirituality. He may still engage himself in ritualistic worship of gods and deities, while his mind is engaged in only worldly inclinations. Sprituality means a transformation of man through his behaviour and outlook towards the world, wiping out all traces of selfishness leading altruism.

Our present educational system needs to be relooked not by a political-educationist committee but by a philosophical educationist committee to revamp the same such that the students inculcate basic values in schools and through parental care of life and not learn only to earn money. In addition, societal groups are needed to promote and preserve the ancient heritage and values. There should be also the watch dog groups to take rectifying action against only unhealthy exposures that may spoil and degenerate the society as is happening through TV advertisements with no control whatsoever.

In this context, it is worth while to mention the example of Ladakh. In the early and mid seventies, the western tourists started visiting Ladakh to enjoy its serene beauty. Local youths were exposed to the seminudist attires and licentious behaviour of the tourists and were tempted by their attitudes. One of the tourists was Helena Norberg Hodge a linguist and an active member of the international society for preservation of Ecology and Culture. She sensed what was happening, learnt the local Tibetan language, formed a group from amongst the local people, and impressed upon them the need to preserve their culture from the unhealthy exposure. She was suspsised by the inherent intimate bond of the ladakhis with their families, land and environment. Later, she wrote a book "The Ancient futures; Learning from the Ladakhis, It was translated into forty languages. Later on, came the Ladakhi regiment of the Indian Army, which showed its mettle in the recent Kargil battles and won bravery medals, should we not learn from the Ladakhis despite our govt.'s" near total apathy towards our heritage, culture and values? .

No doubt, ours is a land of spirituality. So many saints, spiritualists, devotees of God and incarnations have taken birth in this country. But history of the society tells us that once the personages depart, the individuals relapse into somnabulant following of superficial worship of deities and rituals forgetting the essence of philosophical principles of spirituality, life values and altruism.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

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(Continued from last issue)

Eternity Compressed in Time : My Reminiscences of Shri Gurudeva

Shri Gurudeva last considered two poems of Surdas and Mirabai to illustrate the phenomenon of the Dark Night of the Soul, which is found manifested in the lives of all seekers of God. In his pursuit of God the aspirant undergoes tremendous discipline. But God remains hidden. He makes a complete surrender to God. He makes fervent prayer to God for His grace. As Shri Gurudeva has put it, "the darkest hour is nearest the dawn." God can no longer wait and watch. He showers His grace like gentle rain on the prayerful devotee. It is in this context that Shri Gurudeva discusses some significant songs from Hindi saints. These songs express varieties of super-sensuous experiences of these saints.

Shri Gurudeva has grouped the aforesaid songs under nine different heads in an ascending order of spiritual experience. The songs of Group I contain the utterances of Mirabai, Surdas and Tulsidas; Gorakhnath, Dharamdas and Yari; Ekanath and Mahipati. Let us witness the varieties of mystical experience attained by these saints.

(i) Mirabai : Shri Gurudeva gives an exposition of three poems of the mystic-princess Mirabai. In her first song "पायोजी मैने राम रतन धन पायो" , Mirabai speaks of God as an "अमोलिक वस्तु"

and as a "रतनधन", which has been bestowed upon here in his graciousness by her spiritual teacher. This jewel of God is not capable of being stolen away by anybody. Shri Gurudeva here recalls that these very words were used by saint Jnaneshwar who founded the School of Mysticism in Maharashtra about three centuries before Mirabai, in a famous Abhanga :

"अमोलिक रत्न जोडले रे तुज।
का रे ब्रह्मबीज नोळखसी ।।
न बुडे न कळे न मिये चोरा ।
ते वस्तु चतुरा से विजेसु"

Shri Gurudeva also tells us that this Abhanga was later regarded as an auspicious sign and command at the time of the foundation of the Inchageri Math by its great spiritual founder, Shri Bhausahib Maharaj. "It is remarkable," says Shri Gurudeva "how both Mirabai and Jnaneshwar speak equally of God as 'अमोलिक' as a 'रत्न' and as a 'वस्तु' the invaluable jewel of Reality. They speak equally of the impossibility of its being stolen away or pilfered by anybody. In a similar vein we are told by the great Karnatak saint Mahalingaranga in his famous verse : --- ' रत्न वंदिदे नोडिरो ..... कळ्ळर भयविझवो रत्नके' how God may be regarded as a most precious jewel. We may also compare with this the utterance of another great Karnatak saint, Bhavataraka, who tells that God is like a great spiritual treasure, which can never be exhausted, nor can be stolen away by anybody. We thus see how the song of Mirabai is reminiscent of like utterances of great Saints of other provinces of India, such as Maharashtra and Karnatak". (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 228). Secondly, Shri Gurudeva refers to line of Mirabai "सत की नाव केवटिया सतगुरु" which reconciles the Saguna and the Nirguna philosophies of two great Hindi poets, Kabir and Tulsidas. This exemplifies Mirabai's 'सामंजस्यवाद' Kabir's famous line 'सतनाम का भर-भर प्याला' and Mirabai's expression 'सत की नाव' are veritably the meeting points of Nirguna and Saguna Philosohpies. Incidentally, 'गुरु नानक' the founder of the Sikh Faith also laid great stress on 'सतनाम'. Again, Mirabai's line 'केवटिया सतगुरु भवसागरतरि आयो' puts us in mind the 'केवट' of the 'रामचरितमानस' authored by Tulsidas who claims to be of the same profession as Lord Rama ;

'मैं मझधारा का मांझी हूँ। तुम भवसागर के केवट हो॥'

These lines describe God as the great oarsman who carries us beyond the ocean of life. Shri Gurudeva says, "In this way, the song of Mirabai is reminiscent of both Kabir and Nanak, as it is reminiscent of Jnaneshwar, Bhavataraka and Mahalingaranga, as we have seen above."

"Finally, Mirabai tells us that a spiritual experience once attained becomes the capital which by its use gives us compound interest, and goes on increasing day after day." 'दिन-दिन बढत सवायो' (Ibid p. 229).

Coming to the second song of Mirabai 'फागुन के दिन चार रे', Shri Gurudeva tells us that the poem is a fine example of Mirabai's mystic experience both of Sound and Colour. "The Holi holidays last only for four days. Allegorically, this signifies that our human life here below is a very short-lived one, and that therefore, we must turn it to the best account possible. Vita brevis; ars longa, says Latin proverb; 'अनन्तपारं किल शब्दशास्त्रं। तथायुर्बहयवश्चविघ्ना:॥' says a Sanskrit Subhashita. Every moment that is given to us in this life we must turn to the best spiritual account." Mirabai expresses her experience of spiritual sound, when she says, 'बिनि करताल पखावज बाजै ..... बिनि सुर राग छतीसूँ गावै।' She hears the sound of the musical instruments like a drum unbeaten by hands, and hears all the 36 Ragas without a vocal sound. Shri Gurudeva tells us that this is a significant contribution of Mirabai to mystical experience so far as the the Ragas are concerned. Mirabai also mentions her rich mystical experience of colours, so much so that the human garment as well as the celestial sky become deeply saturated : 'उडत गुलाल लाल भयो अंबर बरसत रंग अपार रे'. Again, she tells us that exquisite colours seem to shoot, as it were, from every pore of her body. Shri Gurudeva remarks that the pores of the human body are regarded by other mystics as outlets of sound, light and joy. Explaining Mirabai's song further, he says, Mirabai combines together moral and mystical experience. Character or virtue, she tells us, constitutes the colour and devotion or love the syringe. We have to throw colour by combining the two, namely, virtue and devotion. "Mirabai tells us that by this throwing of colour, she welcomed her Lord who had comeback to the home after playing the Holi. The curtains of sense should now be lifted, says Mirabai, and we must welcome the Lord after losing all sense of shame. This utterance might be taken to mean merely an utterance of 'श्रृंगार'. But this is not so. We have here only apparent 'श्रृंगार' through which shines Mirabai's inner devotion. In the case of Jayadeva, on the other hand, we have an apparent devotion, through which comes out the real 'श्रृंगार'.

Coming to the third song of Mirabai, namely 'साधु कि संगत पाई रे', Shri Gurudeva notes two very significant points in it. In the first place, Mirabai tells us that spiritual life cannot nurtured without the company of the spiritual teacher and the saints. The spiritual teacher and saints perform functions respectively of the mother and the nurse, or to vary the metaphor, of the sower and the gardner. It is only in the company of the good that our spiritual life flowers, and when we come across those who have reached the highest state of realization, it fructifies. I was fortunate, says Mirabai, to come into the company of the great saints who had attained the highest spiritual perfection. 'जाकी पूर्ण कमाई रे' She mentions particularly Namadeva, Kabir and Muktabai, the sister of the great Jnaneshwar, as her compeer lady-devotee. These great saints had mingled their light with the light of God : 'जोत में जोत मिलाई रे' says Mirabai. This is as much as to say, as Washington Irving has put it, "Deep had called unto Deep" or as Green has said "Spirit had called unto Spirit", the spirit within being immersed in spirit without, the immanent and the transcendent have become one.

The second important point involved in Mirabai's song is the doctrine of progressive realization : 'साधु कि संगत गुरुजी की सेवा बनत बन आई रे !!' Explaining the idea Shri Gurudeva tells us that it may not be given to man to reach the very highest limit all at once, and yet a man can always keep going nearer and nearer to the peak. Jnaneshwar remarks that there is just that difference between a perfected mystic and God, as there is between the fourteenth-day moon and the full moon, or between pieces of 23-carat gold and 24 - carat gold. Shri Gurudeva develops this idea in his doctrine of Approximation or Asymptotism by emphasizing that man can perpetually progress in his spiritual realization and approximate to the infinite Divine, attaining the highest acme possible for humanity here below, without a tinge of arrogance or self-complacency. He had a mind to apply this doctrine to different spheres of human thought, such as morality, epistemology and mysticism and metaphysics. For the present, he recalls that Plato had the same doctrine in mind when he spoke of the Idea of the Good as the highest attainable peak of Reality to which all the other ideas make continuous approximation by grades, or when Bradley spoke of the degrees of Truth and Reality, thus insisting upon the doctrine of approximation both in epistemology and metaphysics.

(ii) Surdas and Tulsidas : In the group of Hindi songs pertaining to the varieties of super-sensuous experience, Shri Gurudeva next considers a few songs from Surdas and Tulsidas. He picks up the song 'बंदौं श्रीहरिपद सुखादाई ' with which Surdas opens his great work 'Sursagar'. This song may be regarded as "a classic both of music and mysticism." Surdas first describes the super-sensory effects of meditation on God. He tells us that by the grace of God, a blind man may be able to see all things : 'अंधे कूँ सब कुछदरसाई ' Shri Gurudeva says that Surdas himself was a blind man when he wrote this poem. Great poets like Homer and Milton were blind, and yet they could see things in paradise. Surdas had an internal mystical vision open to him for the vision of God. He further says that by the grace of God a deaf man would be able to hear, and a dumb man would be able to speak. Shri Gurudeva says, "In fact, by proper meditation on God and by His grace, a super-sensuous perception in various forms becomes possible. 'Recalling here Mahatma Gandhi's statuetes of a dumb, a deaf and a blind monkey, Shri Gurudeva tells us that Gandhiji insisted upon being deaf and blind to all things in which ordinary humanity took keen interest. He remarks with an autobiographical ring, "When we shut all the sense organs to outer perception, then probably by proper meditation on God, and by His grace internal senses open, and we are able to perceive, hear and speak things which it would be ordinarily impossible for human beings to do." In this context, he quotes a famous Sutra from Patanjali, which indicates that super-sensuous avenues open for an aspiring mystic in various shapes and forms :

'ततः प्रातिमश्रावण वेदना ऽऽदर्शास्वाद वार्ता जायते'

Surdas then mentions motor experiences of a mystic - 'जाकी कृपा पंगु गिरि लंघै' When God sends His grace, even a lame man might be able to cross the Himalayas. God - realization further produces worldly effects in the sense that God enables His devotee in abject poverty to move on with a royal umbrella unfurled over his head. "रंक चलै सिर छत्र धराई" Hence Surdas advises us to make an humble obeisance at the feet of the Lord after having attained to their vision : 'बार बार बंदउँ तिहि पाई'. Shri Gurudeva calls upon us to note the expression in Surdas," after having attained to their vision." Tukaram has told us,

'जोडोनिया कर मुख पहा सादर !
पायावरी शिर ठेवोनिया !!'

which means that it is a very difficult job for a man to have a vision of God from head to the very feet. Surdas says that the grace of God is absolutely necessary for the attainment of all these things. We should make "continual obeisance" at the feet of God who is infinite mercy incarnate (करुणामय).

The second song of Surdas, 'अब तो प्रगट भई जग जानी' is open to two interpretations : one a personalistic, and the other mystical. Explaining it, Shri Gurudeva says, "while the idea in the line 'वा मोहन से प्रीति निरंतर क्योंहि रहेगी छानी' may support the personalistic interpretation, the idea in the line 'सुन्दर मूरति रोम रोम उरझानी' would support the mystical. According to the latter interpretation, we might understand Surdas to mean, 'The form of God (मूरति), which is known to the whole world has now appeared to my vision. How can my devotion for God be now hidden?" According the former interpretation, we might understand Surdas to imply, 'My love to God is now known to the whole world. Why should I be ashamed of it?" This latter, however is in Gopistic fashion. On the other hand, we understand from Surdas that God had been caught up in every hair-cell of his body, as well as inside the organ of his vision, and thus it had been impossible for him to extricate Him with all his effort : 'निकसत नाहिं बहुत पचि हारी '. 'How would it be possible for him, he asks, to describe the unison? As you cannot separate water from milk, so can you not separate the form of God from myself.' "Shri Gurudeva recalls in this context how other mystics have also told us that "every hair-cell of the body of a mystic becomes the source of divine Light, or Sound, or Colour, or Joy:

'रोम रोम दीपक भया' and 'रोम रोम सुर उठत है ' says Kabir 'रोम रोम रंग सार रे ' says Mirabai; and 'रोम रोम आनंद उपजि करि' says Charandas. In any case, it is important to remember that the infusion of God in the mind of man leads to all these super-sensuous experiences to which the world is entirely blind". (Ibid p. 239).

Shri Gurudeva then comes to Tulsidas' celebrated passage 'विनु पग चलै, सुनै विनु काना ' in which Tulsidas gives a metaphysico-mystical description of God-vision. All super-sensuous powers might be attributed to God. It is impossible for us, says Tulsidas, either to understand, or describe the transcendental powers of God:

'अस सब भाँति अलौकिक करनी !
महिमा तासु जाइ नहिं बरनी !! '

Mystic experience, on the other hand, would consist just in knowing at first-hand the super-sensuous powers of God.

Tulsidas, therefore, tells us that God is able to walk without feet, and perform manifold actions without hands. He is able to see without eyes, and hear without ears. He is able to smell without nose, and touch without a body. He can enjoy flavours without a tongue, and mighty words without a voice." Shri Gurudeva recalls the celebrated passage from the Shvetashvatra Upanishad in this context :

'अपाणिपादौ जवनो ग्रहिता । पश्चत्यचक्षुः स श्रृणोत्यकर्णौः ॥ '

Noting the difference between the description of super-sensuous powers by Tulsidas and Surdas, Shri Gurudeva remarks, "While Tulsidas is giving us an objective and metaphysical treatment of transcendence, Surdas is giving us its subjective and personalistic interpretation."

(To be continued)

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Shri Gurudev referred to the following experience which he had at Satna railway station. The reference came when Bhavatarak's song "Drstiyolage driti nintitu" (the sight got fixed up in sight) was being discussed. "The world after my meitation wore a new appearance. I saw altogether a new world." "A mystic enjoys bliss in the midst of cosmos or existence higher bliss overshadows lower happiness. The vision of God drives away lower joys and endows a devotee with the highest bliss."

The Application of Santometry to Sri Sharakka

Sri Sharakka (Dharwad 1905 - Dharwad 1986) - a hidden spiritual jewel was born in a family of spiritual background and she earned an envious position in the spiritual realm amidst worldly adversities. She lost her mother (Gangabai - the disciple of Gothe Swami) in 1916 and father (Narayanarao - a school teacher) in 1919. (Dasappa - Narayanarao's mother's father was a disciple of Nagalinga (1798 - 1878) - a great saint of Karnataka). Sharakka's marriage took place in 1917 and she became a widow in 1918 and her head was shaven in 1926 and with this all her dreams of persuing higher education were shattered into pieces. However, she was fortunate enough to have spiritual initiation from Sri Amburao Maharaj/ Baba (1856 - 1933) - the premier disciple of the saint of Umadi (1843 - 1914) and reached the height of spiritual pinnacle and guided a number of spiritual aspirants. Therefore, it is not surprising that Sri Sharakka has been compared to some divine being or the other by those who came in some spiritual contact with her. It is against this background that I ponder over the possibilities of the application of Santometry to Sri Sharakka.

To put another way and in more clear terms the present paper depicts how Sri Sharakka has been or can be compared to Janabai, Draupadi, An Angel, Radhabai Limaye, Shivaligavva-

Muktabai, Gurudeo Ranade - the spiritual brother of Baba.

Janabai spent her life in doing menial service at Namadeva's home, and singing the praises of God. As regards her place among female saints of Maharashtra, we may say that she was the greatest of them, barring only the sister of Jnanadeva namely, Muktabai (*vide* for details Ranade 1988:190).

As Sharakka used to assist in every way, especially in the kitchen, and in serving food at the Ashram established by Gurudeo Ranade in Nimbal, Karabasappa Ramappa Avati - the disciple of the saint of Umadi observed, "Sharakka is like Janabai in Namadeo's house." Gurudeo Ranade endorsed Karabasappa's views and immediately said, "There is no doubt about it" (*vide* Bhagavat 2005:28).

Draupadi (the queen of the Pandavas and daughter of King Drupada) was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna used to come to her rescue whenever she prayed to him wholeheartedly at the time of difficulties. And an incidence related to this is as follows :

As desired by Duryodhana, the Sage Durvasa went with his disciples to the Pandavas at the odd hours deliberately i.e. when the power of the vessel given by the Sun was exhausted for the day. The sage asked the Pandavas to prepare the food and hurried off with his disciples to the river. In the kitchen Draupadi prayed eventually to Sri Krishna to come to her aid. At once Sri Krishna appeared before her and expressed that He was terribly hungry and asked her to fetch the vessel. A tiny bit of cooked vegetables and a grain of rice were sticking to the rim of a vessel. Krishna ate them with satisfaction. Durvasa and his disciples felt wellfed. The explanation is that as the whole universe is contained in Sri Krishna, His satisfcation with a single grain of rice satisfied for the time the hunger of all beings including the sage (*vide* for details Rajagopalachari 1996 : 135-38).

During the life time of Sri Sharakka almost a similar incidence took place at Nimbal Ashram at the time of meals. Once somebody brought a few mangoes for Gurudeo Ranade at Nimbal. Gurudeo directed Sharakka to prepare the juice by squeezing them. Accordingly the mango juice was prepared by Sharakka in a small vessel and showed the same to Gurudeo. Gurudeo told Sharakka to serve it to all the *sadhakas* at the time of meals. But at the time of meals more number of *sadhakas* than expected came to the Ashram and the juice in the vessel was not sufficient to serve all of them. Sharakka by taking Divine name started serving mango juice from the small vessel by a ladle to each one of them. After serving the mango juice to all of them she noticed much to her amazement that the quantity of the mango juice remained the same in the vessel. In the sitting Gurudeo Ranade stated that Draupadi's *Thali* (Vessel) was not there only in an ancient time but also now and praised the devotion of Sharakka without taking any credit to himself (Gajendragadakar 2005 : 53-54).

The word 'angel' has Hebrew and Greek origins meaning "messenger" or "announcer". Angels in Christian thought and tradition are spiritual but personal beings, created by God, who possess intuitive knowledge, have free will, are naturally superior to human beings. Angels worship God, act as God's messengers to humanity and prayerfully watch over human beings(*vide* Ekstrom 2000:32.) Let's see below how and why Sharakka has been compared to an angel by one Christian metron.

Sharakka was hospitalized in Dharwad on account of her heart problem in 1975. In the hospital her health not only steadily improved but she could win the hearts of all there (including the Christian metron of Rubi Hall). The metron used to stand for sometime daily by the side of the door of a room of Sharakka and then used to leave the place. This practice went on for some days. Sharakka once called her inside and the metron immediately and joyfully responded. Sharakka asked her the reason for coming there daily. The Metron replied "I come here daily to offer my prayers in a standing position." Sharakka asked her, "Why do you do like this?" The metron replied, "When I saw you for the first time, I could see an aura around you and I came to know that you are an angel. At that time, I had three great obstacles. Had they not been removed my life could have come to an end. I prayed to this angel thinking that if she were really an angel my difficulties could be dispersed. That is why I prayed to you and the difficulties were warded off one after another. I am convinced that you are an angel and I offer my prayers to you daily." Having listened to the story of the metron Sharakka said, "You have prayed from the bottom of heart. God has bestowed on you His grace because you have prayed with utmost devotion. He has warded off your difficulties. Continue the same kind of devotion" (Gajendragadakar 2005 : 114-15).

The above example blurs the distinction between Theometry (assesssment of gods/goddesses and celestial beings) and Santometry (asssessment of saints).

Radhabai Limaye / Ti. Guruvarya Sriaji (Baroda 1857 - Papadi 1939) was a widow. She performed *Saguna Bhakti* in the form of *Wari* (piligrimage in group) to Pandharpur on every *Ekadashi* and attended the Pravachanas of Kotnis Maharaj at Sangli and blessed with *Nām* by Tukaram Maharaj at Amalanakar Muth. Later she was blessed with Divine Name by the saint of

Umadi who became her *Moksha Guru*. She is said to have initiated a hundred disciples as per the divine direction of her *Moksha Guru* (*vide* Dabade 1998:95).

It has come to my notice that both Radhabai Limaye and Sharakka take strikingly a similar stand on the colour of *Atman*. According to them the colour of Atman is like a blue flame which could be seen at the time of the extinguishing of *Arati* (Ceremony of waving light) by itself (*vide* of details Tulpule 1989:10, Gajendragadakar 2005:59).

Sri Shivalingavva (1867-1930) of Jat is a great poetess saint and an ardent lady disciple of the saint of Umadi. Muktabai is a sister of Nivrittinath, Jananadeva, and Sopan. She is initiated by Nivrittinath. Changadeva is the disciple of Muktabai. Muktabai attained *Samadhi* at a very young age.

Regarding the spiritual height attained by Sharakka, Gurudeo Ranade had remarked more than once that she was superior to Shivalingavvakka and Muktabai (*vide* for details Bhagavat 2005:31, Gajendragadakar 1991:39, Dabade 1999:22).

Gurudeo Ranade (1886-1957) is a world renowned philosopher - mystic. He is a mystic in the perennial tradition of the mystic saints. He has not referred to any experience in his monumental works which was not his own. The following two statements made by Gurudeo speak of his bewildering variety and depth of mystical experiences. He states that he has attained some of the experiences which are not recorded in the world of mysticism. Through the grace of his *Guru* (The Saint of Umadi) and *Parama Guru* (The Saint of Nimbargi) Gurudeo Ranade says that he has attained the experiences attained by Narada and Prahlada in the ancient times. It is in the context of mystical experiences that Gurudeo Ranade compares his own spiritual experiencs with those of Sharakka.

Once Sharakka was sitting by the wellside in Nimbal looking at the sky when Gurudeo came there. He asked her about it. She described the *Vastu* she saw and Gurudeo told her she would develop her own form and would get all the experiences he had (Bhagavat 2005:29).

The following Kaleidoscopic table presents a bird's eye view of all the foregoing Santometric incidences applicable to Sri Sharakka.

KALEIDOSCOPIC TABLE OF SANTOMETRY

Sl. No.	Who is Compared	To Whom Compared	By Whom Compared	What Aspect is Compared	Remarks = Equal ⊚ Same ≡ Similar > Greater than
1.	Sharakka	Janabai	Karabasappa	By performing menial service at the saint's	≡
2.	Sharakka	Draupadi	Gurudeo Ranade	Devotion	≡
3.	Sharakka	An angel	Christian Metron	Overcoming problems	⊚
4.	Sharakka	Radhabai	K. B. Dabade	The Colour of Atman	≡
5.	Sharakka	Shivalingavva-Muktabai	Gurudeo Ranade	Spiritual Attainment	Sharakka > Shivalingavva-Muktabai
6.	Sharakka	Gurudeo Ranade	Gurudeo Ranade	Spiritual Experiences	≡

Thus, Sri Sharakka and Janabai performed the menial tasks with their hands while their mind was set on Divine Name, because of their deep devotion Sharakka and Draupadi could satisfy the hunger of a large number of people who came to them without giving any prior intimation, as there was an aura around Sharakka she was thought to be an angel, Sharakka and Radhabai speak in the same language as far as the colour of *Atman* is concerned, Sharakka is more advanced in the spiritual world than even Shivalingavva and Muktabai, and finally there seems to be no difference in the mystical experiences of both Sharakka and Gurudeo Ranade.

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Conception of State and Democracy in Ancient India

1. Study of ancient Indian Political thought is not easy as the source material is very much scattered. The historical dates also pose problems, as our ancients, in their devotion to thought, forgot to tell about their dates. Hence there are serious limitations and practical difficulties in tracing the evolution of ancient political thought.

2. The ancient Indian Political thought is a story of great minds. It is a history of nearly three millenia. It is a story of more than 5000 years civilization. There were many kingdoms and empires in ancient India. Manu was the first monarch; yet he is considered to be a legendry figure in the Rigveda. Brihaspati, who summarised *Dandaniti,* Kautilya, the famous Prime minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya and his immortal work *Arthasastra*, Somadeva Suri, author of *Nitivakyarmitra*, and Kamandak, author of *Nitisastra* are some of the ancient notable political figures.

3. The vedas are sources of ancient Indian polity. References are there in it to tiny and big kingdoms. In ancient India, there was no strong empire. King, the head of the state had many advisors and a Council of ministers. Monarchy was the most prevalent form of government. Needs of people were very few. There were *Sabhas, Samities*. This in brief, is with regard to Sruti, specially the Brahmanas.

4. As for *Smrtis* we have plenty of political ideas regarding society. For instance in *Mahabharata* there is a discussion of poltical thought of ancient India. There were regular wars. Taxes were collected. People obeyed the rule of the kings as Kings were considered to be persons of divine origin. The *Puranas* are full of details regarding ancient political thought. Sri Rama of *Tretayuga* was an ideal King also stood for *Pitrvakya paripalana.* Sri Krishna of the *Dvapara Yuga* was adept in political ethics (Rajaniti nipuna).

5. Kautilya is another great name in the ancient polity. He states in detail the ideals of kings and kingdoms. How a king should conduct himself in private and public life- details regarding this are well pictured by Kautilya. Much care was given to the safety of the empire and its people. Standing army and spy system was always given much importance. His work *Arthasastra* is an in depth study of the state and the machinery of state. War weapons, methods of war, war captives were issues all discussed by Kautiluya. King in the true sense of the term, was a servant of the people. He should be kind hearted and virtuous.

   Since monarchy was the order of the day, republics lost importance. Kamadandakiya *Nitisastra, Sukramitisara-* all emphasize on the punishment to be give to offender of the laws of state.

6. The Non Vedic schools like Jainism and Buddhism also discuss about the Vital issues of Indian Polity. The *Digha Nikaya*, for instance discusses the theory of social contract. Before the state came into existence, the Buddhists and the Jainic texts say that there was a golden age, in which there was perfect harmony and adjustment. In fact both Mahavira and Buddha themeselves were kings.

7. Now there is a big question as to the consituent elements of state. According to Kautilya, who largely represents the whole of Indian polity, there are seven constituent elements, *(Saptanga)*. They are : (i) *Swamin* (ii) *Amatya* (iii) *janapada* (iv) *durga* (v) *Kosha* (vi) *Bala* or *danda* and (vii) *mitra*. *Swamin* means the King. He was an integral part of the (country), state. He should be a person of dynamic nature. He should understand the feelings and *Sentiments* of people. *Amatya* means the governmental machinery. He is a minister in the comprehensive sense of the term. *Janapada* means both territory and population. *Durga* means fort. It is very important for the safety of the state. Construction of forts is obligatory on the Kings. *Kosha* means treasury. Empty treasury was the greatest national calamity. The King should amass wealth by legal means, and should distribute it properly. *Bala* or *danda* is in the form of army. No state can ignore this necessity. It is very much necessary to crush unsocial and antisocial elements. *Mitra* means dependable friend. He should side with the king in all the good endeavours of the king.

8. Now, with regard to the problem of the origin of state. The Indian political thinkers opine that (i) Patriarchal and matriarchal families are the birth place of state. Different families combined to form a *jana* or tribe, which in turn had its own *janapati* or King. This is what is called the Patriarchal and Matriarchal theory. The thinkers of ancient Indian Polity also accepted (ii) the force theory which is a convincing theory of the origin of state. It is only by force that the selfish nature of man could be curbed:

iii) There is also a sort of social Contract theory in the ancient Indian Polity. . The Jains and the Buddhists believed that the state is the outcome of a contract executed between the King and the Subjects, It is the responsibility of the King to protect the people ; and people should perform their duties in a dedicated manner. (iv) The Indian thinkers of polity also believe in the theory of divine origin of the state. *'Raja Pratyaksa devata'* (King is the real God) so goes the saying. The King, issues certain commandments, in the interest of social harmony, and they should be faithfully followed by the Subjects.

9. Now with regard to the duties and functions of state and the subjects. The state, acccording to Kautilya was not only connected with political life but also with economic, social and religious life of people. Individual liberty was recognized but it was harmonised with the promotion of *dharma*. This was a state of socialism in ancient India. It controlled the means of production and distribution.

10. The discussion may be wound up by raising a vital question was there democracy in ancient Indian polity? The answer is difficult to spell out. Of course, largely speaking there was, as the individual was not sacrifised. Infact the ancient Indian Polity never finds opposition between the society and the individuals. Both are complementary to each other. Democracy in a fundamental sense was prevalent in ancient Indian Polity but it may not be parliamentary form of demoracy.

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Rāmagītā

A man who wants the knowledge, to remove is ignorance has to do certain things and has to possess certain things, which are mentioned by Rāma in the following Stanza No. 7

(7)

आदौ स्व-वर्णाश्रम-वर्णिताः क्रिया :
कृत्वा समासादित -शुद्ध - मानसः।
समाप्य तत्पूर्व मुपात्त-साधनः
समाश्रयेत् सद्‌गुरु मात्मलब्धये ॥७॥

First of all, a man (desirous of receiving knowledge) should secure purity of mind, after properly performing the actions (i.e. duties) laid down (by Veda-śāstras) as per his own Varṇa and stage of life (āśrama). Then he should give up (samāpya) those actions. (But) before that he must be equiped with (proper) requisites (to secure that knowledge). Then he should resort to a spiritual teacher in order to gain (the knowledge of) The Self (The Highest Reality) (7).

Explanation : Hindu Dharma śāstras speak of men belonging to four Varṇas constituting the society, namely, Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. Further, they speak of four stages of life in case of the first three Varṇas namely Brahmachrya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha and Sanyasa. Moreover they lay down specific actions or duties for all of them.

It is said that the selfless performance of one's own duties makes the mind of the performer pure. And this purity of the mind (cita-śuddhi) is important in the reception of knowledge.

Further Dharmaśāstras speak of four ends of human life (puraṣārtha) namely Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. A man longing for liberation (mokṣa) is called a spiritual aspirant (mumukṣu). He is expected to possess certain essential equipment or requisites (sādhana). These requirements are not mentioned here by Rāmagitā. Rāmagīta is fully influenced by the monistic philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya's school. So the requirements mentioned in that school are to be understood here as the requisites. They are :- (I) Discrimination between what is eternal and what is non-eternal (nityānitya vastu viveka) (2) Absence of desire to experience enjoyment i.e. Vairagya. (3) possession of Peace of mind etc. (śamādi-ṣaṭka) and (4) Desire to secure salvation (mumukṣatva).

Further the school of Monism alone insists on the due abandonment of actions. Hence the word here "samāpya" is taken in the sense of abandoning (actions).

A spiritual aspirant possessing the necessary things is expected to approach a spiritual preceptor, in order to receive the knowledge of the Self that leads to the liberation. A spiritual teacher is considered[2] to be very important in imparting knowledge.

The word "ātma-labdhaye" stands for gaining the verbal knowledge of Ātman. Here the word 'Ātman' stands for Paramatma/Brahma, the ultimate reality. It is also called Parabrahma (see stanzas No. 32, 38, 51). It is also called Highest God (isvara) in stanza 37. Further, it should be remembered that according to Rāmagītā, Rāma himself is Ātman Parabrahma, the Highest God or the Supreme reality. Moreover, it should be noted that mere verbal knowledge of the Self is not sufficient for Salvation but direct or immediate realisation of the Self is necessary for emancipation.

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Lakṣmaṇa asked for knowledge that removes empirical life.

So Rāma first of all points out the nature of the empirical life in this world, its cause and its remover in stanzas Nos. 8-9 that follow :

(8)

क्रिया शरीरोद्भव - हेतुराहता
प्रियाप्रियौ तोंभवतः सुरागिण :।
धर्मेतरौ तत्र पुनः शरीरकं
पुनःक्रिया चक्रवदीयति भवः ॥८॥

It is held that action (kriyā) earnestly performed (in past life) is the cause of origination of body (i.e. action is the cause of birth). In case of a man who is very much attached to passions, there take place dear/desirable /good and nondear / non-desirable / non-good actions and they assume the form of religious merit (dharma) and otherwise (i.e. non-merit or sin). The latter lead to a (new) body (i.e. birth) again. (Then due to the new body there spring again (more) actions. Thus the empirical life (consisting of birth and rebirth due to action) goes on revolving like a wheel (8).

Explanation : Empirical life in this world is nothing but a cycle of births and rebirths. The cause of these births and rebirths is action (kriyā, karman). An embodied man with egoism and attachment performs actions - good as well as bad. Now according to the theory of action, the fruits of actions must be enjoyed. Fruits of some actions are enjoyed in the present life; but fruits of some actions are not enjoyed in the present life. Now in order to enjoy the fruits of these actions a man has to be reborn again. Thus the action is responsible for birth and rebirth. Further, in the new birth the man performs actions then in order to enjoy the fruits of those actions, he is compelled to take birth again. Thus this cycle of action-birth-action -rebirth goes on and on until a man is liberated. Thus the empirical life (bhava) is nothing but a continuous process of action, birth and rebirth.

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Though action is the immediate cause of birth and rebirth, yet the root-cause of Bhava is a different one. Now that root cause and its remover are mentioned in the next Verse No. 9

(9)

अज्ञानमेवास्य हि मूल-कारणं
तद्धानमेवात्र विधौ विधीयते।
विद्यैव तन्नाशविधौ परीयसी
न कर्म तज्जं सविरोधर्मीरतम् ।।९।।

Of this (empirical life of birth and rebirth) the root-cause is ignorance/Nescience alone. The removal or destruction of this ignorance has been laid down (by Sastras). Knowledge (vidyā) alone is fully capable in the act of destroying that ignorance (Action cannot destory Nescience because) action springing from ignorance is said to be non contradictory to that ignorance (and hence non-destructive of ignorance) (9).

Explanation : The root cause of worldly life is ignorance or Nescience. This Nescience becomes the limiting adjunct (upādhi) of the Self/Brahman/Highest God (see verse No. 28). Due to this Nescience there is superimposition (adhyāsa) of the world on Brahman (See Verse No. 38). And in this superimposed world, there goes on the empirical life. Thus Nescience is the ultimate or root cause of Bhava.

The Śāstras lay down that the destruction of ignorance leads to freedom from empirical life i.e. liberation which is one of the aims of human life.

This ignorance cannot be destroyed by action (Kriyā). The reason is : action spiringing from ignorance is not contradictory to ignorance. Two contradictory things can cancel or destroy each other. e. g. light removes darkness, pleasure removes sorrow. But no such contradiction exists between (1) action and Nescience. Hence action cannot destroy ignorance. Knowledge is contradictory to ignorance. Hence knowledge alone is efficacious to destroy Nescience. Of course this knowledge is not ordinary knowledge; nescience - destroying knowledge is the knowledge of the Self or Brahman.

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What action does is stated in the next stanza No. 10

(10)

न ज्ञानहानिर्न च राग - संक्षयो
भवेत्ततः कर्म सदोषमुद्भवेत् ।
ततः पुनः संसृतिरप्यवारिता
तस्माद् बुधो ज्ञानविचारवान् भवेत् ॥१०॥

From action proceeds neither the destruction of Nscience nor the removal of attachment (to worldly things). On the contrary new action with fault arises from that previous action. Then it becomes inevitable that those new actions lead to empirical life (samsṛti). (Now as knowledge is capable to destroy ignorance) a wise man should think of obtaining knowledge (10).

Explanation : Action arises from attachment and from ignorance (see stanzas Nos. 8-9). It is not capable to destory either attachment or ignorance. It leads to further actions which lead to new birth. In other words, action is responisble for worldly life only. The fault (dosa) in the action is that it leads to a series of births and rebirths. But as knowledge is efficacious to destroy ignorance, a man must turn to gain knowledge.

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There are certain people who think that mere knowledge does not lead to destruction of ignorance and to liberation (mokṣa). Knowledge with the help of action can lead to liberation. The men who hold this view are called champions of the combination of action and knowledge (jnāna-karma-samuccaya-vādin). They are called 'vitark-vadin' in Stanza No. 14. Rāmagītā does not accept this view. But before criticising this view, Rāmagītā states this view in Verse No. 11 and first two lines of Verse No. 12.

(11)

ननु क्रिया वेदमुखेन चोदिता
तथैव विद्या पुरुषार्थ-साधनम् ।
कर्तव्यता प्राणभृतः प्रचोदिता
विद्यासहायत्वमुपैतिसा पुनः ॥११॥

Just as action is prescribed (by Vedas) so also knowledge has been prescribed by the mouth of the Veda, as the means of securing aims of human life (puruṣārtha). Further in case of living beings, the Veda has laid down action as the duty which must be performed. (so it is to be understood that) the action helps knowledge (in gaining all ends of human life) (11).

Explanation : Vedas (including Upanisads) speak of action and knowledge as the means to secure the aims of human life. Namely Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. The first three aims are possible due to actions and the fourth i.e. Mokṣa (1) is possbile due to knowledge. But the Veda lays down that action is (2) obligatory. This means that along with knowledge, action is to be performed. In other words, one has to say that action helps knowledge (in securing salvation).

The word 'kartavyatā' is to be taken in the sense of 'kartavyatayā'.

Another argument of jnāna-karma -samucchaya d - Vadin and objection to it are stated in Verse No. (12).

(to be continued...)

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FUTURE OF INDIA

Future of India or Bharata Varsha in the Light of Sri Aurobindo & the Mother is very bright. They envision & envisage that this most ancient land of Integral Spiritual Wisdom abundent in natural and human resource & highest in culture alone is most befitting to become the Guru of the Globe to establish 'Life Divine' on earth.

The date of Indian Independence was exactly on the 75th birthday of Sri Aurobindo. Although Sri Aurobindo & the Mother had done their Tapas for the liberation of united India, we got fractured Independence due to folly of the then Indian Leaders and treachery of the British. When Sri Aurobindo was requested to give His divine message on this significant day, he kindly gave a five fold message to the nation. This can be taken as the comprehensive divine development plan (CDP) for the future progress of India and as its path to become the global Superpower and to lead humanity towards permanent Peace, Harmony & Concord with its supreme spiritual & material powers. The five visions to be fulfilled in successive steps in course of time are - first : achievement of Akhanda Bharat or united India ; second: Asian Resurgence; third : world unity with Indian leadership; fourth : spritual gift of India to the world; fifth and the last :is the advent of a new race called by Sri Aurobindo as the 'Supramental Race' far above the present imperfect and transitory human race which suffers from Ignorance, Ego & Desires. Fully developed 'Akhanda Bharat' of first step shall be strongest economically, militarily & spiritually. While stressing on the necessity of achievement of this Akhand Bharat or Unified India, Sri Aurobindo exhorts that the failure to achieve this goal would seriously weaken India and even cripple it. "Civil strife may remain always possible, even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired, or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go."

Then, What should we do to achieve this Akhanda Bharat? Well; What is wanting amongst our countrymen is Number 1: genuine identification with this Supreme Vision and Number 2: the will to work hard incessantly with sincerity, patriotic spirit, dedication and selflessness. Here patriotism includes the most important aspect of genuine understanding of the Swadharma of this ancient land which has been repeatedly exhorted by Sri Aurobindo & the other past saints & sages as 'Sanatana'. This Akhanda Bharat is not a new concept; it is the most ancient land where our Rishis lived and realised the universal truth such as :

सर्वम् खलु इदम ब्रह्म ; ईशावास्यमिदम् सर्वम् ;
वसुधैव कुटुंबकम् ; इदम् विश्वम् इदम् वरिष्टम् ;

The true territory of this Akhanda Bharat or Bharata Varsha is described in the Vishnu Purana which was written thousands of years before the Christian Era as :

उत्तरम् यत् समुद्रस्य हिमोद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम् ।
वर्षम् तद् भारतम् नाम भारती यत्र संतति : ।

This Bharata Varsha is described in Srimad Bhagavatam as 'अजनाभ वर्ष' meaning the country which stands on the naval lotus of the unborn lord Sri Vishnu. Further, as each individual human being evolves according to his own Swarupa, Swabhava and Swadharma with soul as his central Truth as codified in our sanctified scriptures of India, each nation has its own Swarupa, Swabhava and Swadharma with national soul as its supreme truth. Accordingly, the Swarupa and Swabhava of our Bharata Varsha are symbolized by the Vedic dictum of सत्यम् ऋतम् बृहत् and सत्यम् शिवम् सुन्दरम् ।

Similarly, 'Swadharma' of our Mother India or Akhanda Bharat is 'Sanatana Dharma' which is Apourusheya, eternal, all embracing, polytheistic, evolutionary and not revelatory like the creedal, semetic religiodns of the West. Sri Aurobindo has elaborately explained about Sanatana Dharma; in his divine writings. The concepts of Dharma, Karma and Brahma constitute the tripod of Sanatana Dharma; it is not at all a religion but a supreme and universal way of life and aspires to make the whole universe noble. " कृण्वन्तो विश्वमार्यम् । This Sanatana Manava Dharma does include the creedal religions like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism etc & not vice versa. The Supreme Court's explanation on 'Dharma' is fully in conformity with the above description. This highest Court defines 'Dharma is that which up holds, nourishes or supports the stability of the society, maintains social order and secures the general well-being and progress of mankind."

With the available abundant natural resources and human resources, India can definitely become a global Super Power. As regards Military and Economic strength, our wise President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam ensures that by 2020, India shall rise itself into the group of most developed Nations with Self Reliance mission in Defence system 1995-2005 which will provide our

Armed Forces with a state-of-the-art weapons system and this added to the five mega missions in specified areas of i) Horticulture and food processing ii) Electric power iii) Education and health iv) Information Technology and v) Strategic sectors for national security through-Vision for integrated implemetnation with a national focus will ultimately result in Strong Defence Force and Economic prosperity. However, in his famous book 'India 2020' our President has not elaborated on the spiritual and cultural progress of the nation in accordance with its 'Swadharma'. It is here, our lord Sri Aurobindo offers us a key note through his message to Andhra University on 11th Dec 1948 (while receiving Sri C. R. Reddy National Prize in absentia) wherin he states significantly that India may become greatest nation evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a power-organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, dominating larger part of the world, but if She forfeits Her 'Swadharma' and loses Her soul, then the ancient India and Her Sprit might disappear altogether. Way back in 1914, Sri Aurobindo wrote "Spirituality is India's only politics, the fulfillment of the Sanatana Dharma its only Swaraj."

The aim of India becoming a global Superpower with Sanatana Dharma is Her national Dharma and Her life-perfecting dynamic Spirituality as her Mantra of Social transformation is not an Utopian plan if Indians become fully aware and alert of the prevalent destructive and constructive forces and act upon with constant vigilance.

Firstly The DESTRUCTIVE FORCES can be summed up as - i) Forced conversions from Hinduism to semetic religions with malafide intention of steadily converting the whole country by demographic religious changes ii) terrorism with Jehad as the universal weapon iii) Naxalism iv) Communism and Maoism v) unauthorised continued infiltration of non Indians in crores from neighbouring countries again for effecting the demographic religious changes vi) increasing corruption, nepotism and red tapism vii) increasing violence and injustice on women folk viii) distorted, pseudo secular and anti Hindu attitude & reports of anti-national multi media and individuals ix) radical globalisation at the cost of Swadeshi Movement x) non patriotic and antinational attitude of majority of youth to ape western style of life inimical to the spirit & culture of Bharat and xi) abnormal growth of population and environmental pollution. A Special and serious note of caution to all Indians over this neglected issue of environment pollution is the adverse effects of pollutants on air, sound, smell, water and soil and their impacts on Mother nature, man and all other life. The industrial revolution and modern civilisation turn the natural air we breathe into a waste-basket in which dust, noxious fumes, toxic gases, mist, odour and smoke are emitted. Water-pollution has become a serious problem ever since sewage and industrial effluents began being disposed into the rivers. In case of land pollution, inorganic fertilisers such as nitrogen, phosphate and potash which are used in larger quantities for more agricultural produce have caused havoc on the land-fertility and cause rotting of plants. Numerous pesticides, insecticides and herbicides have aggravated the problem and are making the intelligent agriculturist to return to the natural compost and Vedic method of agriculture to regain the richness of most fertile and protected land of India (Vasundhara). As a result of the invention of nuclear power and nuclear weapons, radio active materials have found their way into the atmosphere and water courses leading to mutagenetic effects. Next, noise pollution : due to increased industrial operations, motor and air traffic and our modern mechanised day-to-day life activities have contributed to noise pollution resulting in injuiry to health of human, animal and plant life. Lastly, most important source of environmental pollution is the multiplying Indian population consuming disproportionately more natural resources and creating abnormal wastes. I have deliberately elaborated on this Environmental pollution which is portending the most destructive force of Indian continent in particular and globe in general. All Indians must become fully aware and alert and do their little bit to save our Mother land. In the words of our divine Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, we should all become more and more integrally conscious and eliminate these destructive forces unitedly.

Then, The CONSTRUCTIVE FORCES can be summed up as - 1) Indian union Commands 160 milion hectares of cultivable land of great natural fertility, abundant water and unlimited sunshine, out of the total land of 329 milion hectares. Hence Agriculture can be our greatest asset involving about 70% population living in 6.70 Lakh villages. High trajectory growth rate in agriculture on sustained basis with natural compost would lead to rural prosperity, enhanced buying capacity triggering high industrial growth. Secondly, other areas of large scale productive activities are Energy sector, non Corporate sector, Service sector, textiles, software & IT Technology, crucial role of FDI etc., Thirdly, as regards huge man-power, 90 cores of Hindus of India and about 10 crores of Hindus living abroad should first get united amongest themselves on the basis of their Sanatana Dharma by eliminating Caste and Creed prejudices; meaningless rituals and superstitions, high and low Society discriminations etc and be proud of Hinduism as the most secular Dharma and not a religion of creeds and get liberated from the present false prestige of pseudosecularism.

Next most important point to be borne in Indian mind is about unity amongst 90 crores of Hindus, 13 crores of Muslims, 5 crores of Christians & other minor religions of about 1/2 crore. Sri Aurobindo stresses on the amity and unity amongst Hindus, Muslims and Christians as all are growing souls and श्रीमन् नारायण dwells in them all ; but pampering the minortiy community as the 'Vote bank' must be avoided. The most tolerant Hindus have to forget and forgive the worst tragic past history of treachery and slavery of 1500 years and create a vast Spiritual basis beyond religions for such an unity by Divine Grace. To go beyond religions and embrace life perfecting dynamic spirituality, general society has to climb the shining ladder of Sanatana Dharma. At this juncture, Indian spiritualists should constantly bear in mind that the spiritual essence of other semetic major religions of the world aims only at the individual realisation of monotheistic God and has no place nor faith in the eternal evolution of Consciousness (eternal Becoming of the Being), rebirths and immortality and hence does not conform to the life-perfecting dynamic spirituality envisaged in the Vedas and put into practice by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the first time on our Earth for collective Mukti.

Another very important Constructive force to be developed is as follows : Gramoddhar & Gram Swaraj are known ideals for India to follow for social upliftment at the village level. Nationalists like Nanaji Deshmukh have already set example in this direction. Our spiritual Organisation, Sri Aurobindo Society adds one more parameter here, namely, Gram-Atmodhar meaning Spiritualisation of the village community by resorting to life-perfecting dynamic spiritual values in all walks of life beyond religions in addition to the eternal moral values of our Indian Culture. Sri Aurobindo Society state Units across the Nation in coordination with the local centres of Sri Aurobindo

Society I feel, should pickup one or two villages in each state and volunteer to train the Panchayat members & a few Volunteer youths in understanding and practising in their daily lives the tenets of Sanatana Dharma, Integral Education & Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo with spiritualisation of the village community as the aim. This can ultimately result in upliftment of the huge mass of infra rational society to the rational stage and then on to the Supra rational stage as advocated by Sri Aurobindo. Sanskrit, the Mother of all known languages of the globe should be steadily evolved into the spoken language of such an exemplary village and should gradually be made the medium of instruction in all schools of the said village along with State language. I personally strongly feel with my long experience and contact with the villages in Karnataka that such local centres of Sri Aurobindo Society in each state which take the onerous responsibility of developing the said typical and critical villages steadily into integral spiritual communities within 4 to 5 decades should be declared by the authorities of Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry as "Integral Development Centres" and special attention be bestowed by G. O. s. N. G. O. s. and concerned Panchayat samities along with Sri Aurobindo Society for financial, technical, administrative and executive help and guidance. Sri Aurobindo Society, Karnataka Unit has humbly initiated the proposals to develop one typical and critical village in North Karnataka which has been already encouraged and formally blessed by our today's Chief Guest of this great Conference, namely, His Excellency, Governor of Karnataka. As chairman of Karnataka Unit of Sri Aurobindo Society, I avail this opportunity to request him again to evince keenest interest in guiding us and to advise the State Government to fund our proposed Project of Rs. 10 Crores to the maximum extent possible. As Mother ordained, the highest authorities of CAPART and All India Panchayat Sanghatan stationed in Delhi have graced this function of CAPART. May I request both Taori Sab & Gaur Sab to guide us & help us financially as much as possible to make our exemplary Project a success in course of time. We are also sure of the magnanimous & constant help from the the regional cerntre of CAPART, Dharwad.

CONCULSION :

Lastly, I wish to sum up with my personal aspirations and prayers to the Divine Mother that according to Her cryptic remark, Indian Constituation should be suitably modified by the Constitutional experts duly keeping in view that the Parliamentary government on the lines of some Western Countries is not suited to India as it does not allow the emergence of national consensus in Politics; Sri Aurobindo suggests the formation of a national government not based on the party system with its narrow ideological approach but with a national vision and approach. One should begin with the old Panchayat system in the villages and then work upto the top with Rashtrapati having considerable powers to implement the progressive policies with support of all the concerned. With such a modified Constitutional setup, Integral Education and Integral Yoga advocated by Sri Aurobindo should be incorporated in the Constitution as National Education & National Yoga; Sanskrit should be adopted as the National language & 'Sanatana Dharma' should be adopted as national Dharma. 'India' should be renamed as Bharata Varsha or 'Ajanabha Varsha' as described in Srimad Bhagavatam. This is my aspiration & prayer for the future prosperous India and fulfillment of Sri Aurobindo's five fold vision for the total good of the world. Well reputed dynamic nationalist Padma Bhushan Jagmohanji, former Governor & then Union Minister repeatedly expresses about amendments in our

Constitutaion to declare India as Vedantist State and the youngest Nobel scientist, Prof. Brian David Josephson, British Physicist speaks so high of Vedanta. But, we as Sri Aurobindoneans go some more steps ahead to suggest radical amendments in our Constitution as aspired above which cannot be an Utopean idea when our AIM is 'Life Divine' on this very burning earth. Of course, this is a stupendous task requiring colossal and united efforts of our parliamentarians who have to think and act only on the age-old Indian principle of सत्यम्, ऋतम्, बृहत् with support of common Indians for decades to come.

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'Tip of the nose' means 'near the tip'. The form of God does not become steady if the eyes converge at a distance. Steadiness of form even at a distance can only be achieved by an advanced mystic. He can command God to stand steady before his vision. Shri Maharaj used to quote Kabir's words: God walks like a sepoy before me.' Shri Baba used to visualise the form of God even with his eyes wide open. But this is verily climbing the giddy heights of mystical experience and it becomes possible only after appropriating the God -head under whose suzerainty the world runs.

- Gurudeo R. D. Ranade

Sanctifying Life Through Work- The Message of Isavasyopanishad

The Isavasyopanishad is of great spiritual value and is the only upanishad found as an integral part of a samhita in Sukla-Yajur-Veda. It is in the form of verses. It has taken up in a superb way a reconciliation of the dichotomy of human life and activity with spiritual quest and renunciation. The last of the mantras,

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥ Isa..18

indicates a prayer of a person at the time of death, to remove his sins and lead him to the realm of immortality. So this cannot be a prayer of a 'jivan mukta' or one who is liberated while alive. The mantras show the path to all of us who live in duality distinguishing between sin and virtue. Human life is impossible without the support from material objects which are usually classified as not-self. For comfort in life, man has to work studying, transforming and utilizing nature's bounties or the not-self. Such efforts are termed in the scriptures as 'avidya'. A narrow pursuit of worldly objects may lead one to stark materialism in search of transient pleasures. On the other hand there is a few who pursue 'vidya' or spiritual studies and seek the Being. In case this leads to inaction, it will land the seeker on the shores of life negation. The upanisad says ;

अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽ विद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायाँ रताः ।। Isa..9

Whoever pursues avidya enters into blinding darkness. Into greater darkness, as it were, do they enter who delight in vidya. And also,

अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो ये उ सम्भूत्याँ रताः ।। Isa..12

Into deep darkness do they enter who worship the asambhuti (the world of becoming as detached from Being). Into still greater darkness; as it were, do they enter who delight in Sambhuti (pure Being or Brahman).

The Upanishad reconciles the two extreme positions of zestful work and enjoyment with that of renunciation and spiritual quest and explains that this is the way to life's fulfilment and eventual liberation. The action and enjoyment will not become hindrance to spiritual progress if done in a spirit of self-abnegation. The great teachers did not feel that world belonged to them, but considered themselves belonging to the world. They have shown that by cultivating a proper attitude, work can become leisure.

निवृत्तिरपि मूढस्य प्रवृत्तिरुपजायते ।
प्रवृत्तरपि धीरस्य निवृत्तिफलभागिनी ।।

Ashtavakra gita XVII.61

For the foolish man even leisure becomes labour, for the wise man, even labour yields the fruits of leisure. Kabir's weaving and Gandhiji's spinning were a part of their spiritual sadhana and it really gave them leisure and nourished their inner life. Work without attachment is the central theme of Bhagavad Gita, Gita urges the seeker to work without attachment to the fruits or results there of and consecrate the fruits or results thereof to the Being.

The upanishadic Rishi adds a positive note to the above by the very important second mantra.

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीवषेच्छतँ समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतो ऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ Isa..2

In this world one should desire to live a hundred years (with joy and zest) but only by performing (righteous and altruistic) actions. There is no other way and by doing such works (in the light of the divine) they do not taint you (by the bondage of karmas). The Rishi enjoins a positive attitude towards our life, desiring to live a happy long span of life engaged in right actions.

How to ensure that the actions are righteous and what can motivate such actions? This has been a question posed by many sages, philosophers and statemen. Many religions teach the brotherhood of man since all are children of God. Nations consider their citizens bound by the feeling of patriotism or control their actions by fear of punishment. The first mantra of Isa upanishad is very lofty in its meaning and gives the conviction for the need of righteous actions and spiritual quest. In fact the first two mantras are elaborated in the remaing mantras.

Looking around the objective world, we are aware of the astounding law and power behind the world phenomenon. Science today has come to the conclusion that energy waves constitute matter, which acts in an orderly manner. Intelligences is predicated to this mysterious energy. By self-enquiry man reaches a conclusion that his nature is pure consciousness, not different from the all pervading energy, Gandhiji said :

"There is a law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law, since no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings. The law and the law giver are one." Man feels very humble before this infinite supreme law and power and his mind's highest rendering of it is the concept of God or Isa.

The upanishad says in its first mantra :

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदँ सर्व यत्किच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुजींथा मा गृघ : कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥ Isa..1

This entire universe, whatever is manifested and changing is the abode of divinity. (it is in fact divinity itself). Support yourself but with a feeling of renunciation. Do not covet the wealth of anyone.

Whose is all this wealth (including you and what you claim to be yours)? God pervades it all and it does not belong to anyone. But when you renounce your narrow self and consider yourself as a part of this divine manifestation, it all belongs to you. If this is the attitude with which we live an active life, it brings in real happiness to the entire world and our life becomes consecrated.

Acknowledgement : I humbly offer my obiesance to the great teachers on whose writings I have heavily relied in the preparation of this article.

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> *"He who meditates during twilight is blessed with longevity and strength. The two junctions between day and night are immediate between two states wakefulness and sleep. The body has a tendency to become calm at those moments. Therefore, if we meditate towards morning and towards evening, it is highly advantageous from the point of view of mystical experience. "*
>
> *- Gurudev Ranade*

(Continued from last issue)

Bhagwadgeeta & its exposition
by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter IX (राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोग)

The Supreme Knowledge and the Sovereign Secret Mystery

(Sanskrit Script followed by English Translation)

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिता : ॥१२॥

Ignorant persons having vain hopes, vain actions and false knowledge possess the delusive qualities of friends and demons.

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains :

(As said in the previous stanza) those who have false notions about my eternal formless existence, spend their life-time in vain like clouds which do not bear rain, like waves seen from a distance in the water appearing in a mirage, like horse-riding warriors in a picture are to be seen only, like the teats on the neck of a goat which do not produce any milk or like certain trees which cannot bear any fruit. Their life is like that of a fool who does not know what is wisdom. If they make a study of any philosophies, theories or sciences, it remains superficial and in vain. Likewise, Oh Arjuna those who do not have their mind under their control, all their knowledged behavioural disciplines go in vain. Their discriminative and reasoning powers get overwhelmed by fiendish and demonic delusions and they become easy prey to insurmountable ignorance. They get drowned in deep waters of delusion without any helping hand of the thoughts of knowledge. They fall down the precipice of chain of errors and lose their way out not knowing which way to look out. Sri Krishna said, if we go on describing the condition of pathless fools, it will only bring fatigue to the talk. I will now tell you about the ways of the virtuous which gives a sweetness to the talk as well as the ears.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

But great souls, oh Arjuna, who abide in the divine nature, know Me as the imperishable source of all beings and worship Me with an undivided mind.

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains :

I stay in the clear unpolluted minds of these virtuous persons of great souls abiding in divine nature as a sanyasi who sees a sacred spot and wants to stay there permanently. These persons are desireless even in their sleep and no passion enters their minds even in dreams. In their intense desire to realise God, their minds are open only to virtuous things and sacred sanguine thoughts. They have bathed in the river of knowledge and attained purity inside and outside. They are satiated with attainment of Parabramha, and their body has as if grown new sprouts of peace and fresh life. Their body has as if attained a new spring of Bramha and appear as if they are the new pillars of courage to the whole world. They are as if filled to the brim being dipped in the lake of bliss. Their devotion is of such a high order that they have overwhelmed liberation itself and their mere simple actions are fountains of natural morality. They have adorned all their limbs with ornaments of peace and have enlarged their minds so widely that they have myself also inside it. They provide an ideal example of Satwik (virtuous) nature described in Bhagwadgeeta. They duly understand that every thing in the world is generated out of my own form and worship me with an increased devotion. However with all the devotion towards me, there is no entrance of duality in their minds. Oh Arjuna, these persons who become one with me and worship me, have an astonishing quality in them, which I will tell you now.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपास्यते ।।१४।।

Persons of firm resolve and steadfast discipline worship me always singing my glory, bowing down to me with devotion always striving to attain me in realisation.

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains :

They sing and dance in my glory and absolve all ways of redemption from past sins. Singing glory removed the last trace of sin. Overpowering the senses and controlling the mind were left far behind and visiting sacred religious places never need to be mentioned. The god of death said why should I stop this dance of glory by bringing death? No blemish has remained in this continuous dance of glorifying my name. It removes the sins and unhappiness of all beings and brings about their emancipation leading to the bliss of Bramha. These persons bring light and self-knowledge to all beings before the sunrise. They protect the lives of beings without nectar. They show the experience of self-liberation without the hard effort of Yoga disciplined activities. They do not differentiate between the kings and common men nor the young and the aged. They become the source of bliss for the whole world making the aspiration of the heaven for bliss non-essential. To say that these virtuous people are like the sun, they do not have the defect of setting like the sun. If I say they are like the moon, the moon is full only once in a month. If I say that they are like the cloud, the cloud does not always give rain. Doubtless they are like the lion with wings. After serving me thousands of births, my name dances on their tongue forever. If I am not in Vaikunth (Heaven), not in the solar colony (सूर्यलोक), not in Yogi's mind, I will certainly be found in the minds of such virtuous persons who glorify my name with great devotion. They are so much engrossed in the glory of my name, they forget the time and space and find complete bliss in themselves. They sing the poems compiled with my simple names like Krishna, Vishnu, Hari, Govind etc. and in between talk about spiritual topics in man's life. Oh Arjuna, in this way, these persons walk around the whole world singing my glory. There are others who gain victory over their prānās and mind itself once for all and live in bliss. Then Bhagwan Shri Krishna explains the philosophy and practice of Ashtang Yoga and how the yogis make the Kundalini travel upwards and reach the seventeen sectored lake of nectar with their pranas and mind powered by the light of Kundalini as if by moonlight. At this time, the mind vanquishes the sensual pleasures and brings the senses themselves as slaves to the heart. At the same time the tough horsemen of Dharana (practice of mind to become steady) bring together the five basic elements and defeat the four fold army consisting the mind, intellect, Chitta and ego of the desire and passion. Thereafter the drum of meditation celebrates the victory and raises the flag of realisation. Afterwards the Samadhi form of Laxmi is enthroned to rule the kingdom of self-experience of highest order. Oh Arjuna, I have thus told you about those who adopt this difficult worship of mine.

Now I will tell you about other different type of worshippers. Just as in cloth, the straightwise and crosswise threads are the same, similarly in this world there is Me only everywhere to form the world. These worshippers do not understand anything else. Right from the supreme Brahma to the smallest creature, say, the ant are same to them all being my form only. They thus prostrate themselves before all the beings in salutation. In the process they lose all their ego and pride, all respect and disrespect. They become laden with extreme devotion to me like a branch of a tree fully laden with fruit. They cannot remain without me and become one with me. Oh Arjuna, I have thus told you what is supreme devotion to me.

Now I will tell you about those who reach me through Supreme knowledge and devotion. This has been described in 4th chapter stanzas 33 to 42. However I will tell you again looking to your eagerness to listen. (This comes in next stanza).

(To be continued)

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The name of God is both a means as well as end. It is through the Name that we reach God; as such it is a means. But to those who attach themselves to the 'Name' irrespective of spiritual experience, it is an end in itself. Both the readings on the Abhanga, 'Name is the only ideal' and 'Name is the only means' are true to their own way. The name which sprouts into an experience of the Atman is called Sabija name.

- Gurudeo R. D. Ranade

Benedictions To Mahalinga
"मंगल महालिंग उमदीश"

(The Kannada Poem composed by Sri Rudrappa Hippargi the disciple of the Saint of Umadi in the Devanagari script)

मंगल महालिंग उमदीश। मुनिजन पोष।
भास उपाधितीत सर्वेश । इंचगेरिवास ।।धृ।।

पृथ्विमेलिन प्रेम भक्तरनु । परिपालिसुव
नित्यनित्यदि सत्य शंकरने।।चित्तशुध्दि माडु
एन्न कर्तृ निन्न करुणविट्टु । मृत्युविन बाधेयनु
बिडिसुव सत्य सद्गुरु काडसिध्द ।।१।।

धरणि पालिप दुरित संहरने । त्रिपुरांतकने ।
चरण सेवक भजक रक्षकने। मायावि नीने परमपावन
पंचपाशकने । मरेय होक्कर बिरुदु कायुवं अरवु
कोट्ट मरवु बिडिसुव। शरणजनरस्मरणि तारक
सुंदरात्मक सगुण निधिये ।।२।।

अष्टदिक्पालकर ओडेयने । सृष्टिकर्ता ।
श्रेष्ठ सद्गुरुलिंगजंगमने ।। निष्ठेयिंदलि नंबिदवर
कष्ट कडिदु कडेगे हायिसुव। वृष्टि अमृत सुरिदु
जगदि जयजय पडेदंथ सदगुरु ।।३।।

Benedictions to *Mahalinga*, the Lord of Umadi,
The guardian of the saintly, O *Inchagerivasa*,
The indistintive and peerless one are you;
Benedictions to *Mahalinga*, the Lord of Umadi.

The rearer of your dear votaries here on earth
With care from day-to-day, O *Shankara,* the truthful one,
Cleanse my mind, O the Maker of me, the truthful one.
The exterminator are you of the fear of death.
O *Sadguru Kadasiddha,* the eternal one;
Benedictions to *Mahalinga,* the Lord of *Umadi.*

The guradian of the world and destroyer of the Evil,
O *Tripuranthaka*, the saviour of the ones who serve
and sing in praise of you,
The wizard are you, O *Panchapashaka*, the holiest of the holy,
The retriever of honour of the ones crying for your mercy,
O The Restorer of wisdom and the Dispellor of oblivion,
Manifest are you in the minds of your supplicants,
The ultimate Liberator, the beautious treasure of virtues;
Benedictions to *Mahalinga*, the Lord of *Umadi.*

The Lord of the guardian angels of eight directions,
O *Sadguru Jangama,* the Supreme, the Creater you are;
Exterpating the sufferings of the ones having in you
the earnest faith,
You enable them sail smoothly till they reach
their destined time;
Shower the rain of Ambrosial-Nectar on to the world,
Kudos to you O Lord, the victorious *Sadguru;*
Benedictions to *Mahalinga*, the Lord of *Umadi.*

Transcreated by :

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The Virasaiva Pathway to Liberation

At a time when all the elevating forces of thought, feeling, will and the driving forces of national culture are virtually discarded by the ruling classes and intellectuals it is worthwhile to investigate spiritual forces as prime movers of human action. It is unfortunate that the forces of spiritual culture have become anaemic after India became free. In India every mindset is swept by the fear of being left behind in the rat race. Uncertainties of unsettled life drive most people to spirituality. Also there is a craving in the heart of man for peace and contentment. This is how man is driven to go beyond the pleasures of animal impulses and seek solace in the search for the infinite - God.

In *Virasaivism* God comes into the experience of the religious aspirant in proportion to the purity of inner and outer life and the intensity of his effort seeking union with God. This is roughly expressed in *Virasaivism* by its close union of the six *sthalas* and the six corresponding lingas. *Satsthala* theory is an attempt to render the genetic development of ever-deepening and ever-widening religious experience, as a process of self-fulfilment of man and God in and through their interplay culminating in integral self-perfection or active union of each in the other, best described as *linganga samarasya.* The actuality of this concrete religious experience is urged onward and upward by the spontaneity of the individual psychic eros and the divine eros, which by their own creativity ever enter into new phase of itself. It is by a converse process that each, man and God, comes into closer and closer relation with the other culminating in *linganga samarasya,* where each is drowned in the other, each equally actively enjoying the companionship. In this *Virasaiva* concept of religion the process of union of both man and God, is distinguished as taking place in the six-phase *(satsthala)* manner. The six phases *(sthala)* of the religious aspirant are called *bhakta, mahesha, prasadi, pranalingi, sarana* and *aikya sthalas.* Conversely the six phases of God are named *maha linga, prasada linga, Jangama Linga, Siva linga, Guru Linga* and *acharalinga.* The intrinsic values enjoyed in each phase of development are called *sadbhakti, nishta bhakti, avadhana bhakti, anubhava bhakti, ananda bhakti* and *samarasa bhakti.* It is not relevant, for my purpose here, to enter into an elaboration of technicalities peculiar to the *Virasaiva* concept of religion. Correspondingly every religion will have its own technicalities. It is my intention here to present *Virasaiva* concept of *satsthala* in its most general aspects.

In order to ensure the unhindered progress of the self-development or the self-formation of the nascent religious aspirant's character, finding completion in integral self-perfection, the *Virasaiva* concept of religion is illustrated in *satsthala.* Really speaking the more intimate religious experience involving *bhakti* is analyzable into :

1. The desire of the aspirant when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotion towards him,
2. The pain of loving devotion and the divine return of love,
3. The delight of love enjoyed and the play of that delight, and
4. The eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover, which is

the heart of celestial bliss called *linganga samarasya.*

To account for the ongoing nature of the creative activity of the world, man and God, a principle of primordial dynamic power driving them forward is necessary. It is called *Sakti,* by whose general activity everything implicates itself into the creative activities. All dynamism in man, God and the world is because of this primordial principle of dynamic power called *Sakti.* In the technical exposition of the doctrine of *satsthala, lingasthala* differentiates itself into *bhavalinga, pranalinga* and *isthalinga,* which in turn differentiate themselves into *mahalinga, prasadalinga, jangamalinga, sivalinga, gurulinga, and acharalinga.*

It is not my purpose, here, to enter into a detailed account of the various doctrines held by the *Vacanakaras.* In all my discussion I have restricted myself to the most general ideas. Here an attempt is made to present the thoughts and experiences of the *Vacanakaras* in the most general terms which commend themselves for universal acceptance.

According to *Vacanakaras* man is the unity of physical, chemical, biological, psychological, social, moral and spiritual impulses. In so far as he has inheritances from animal ancestry it is difficult for him to overcome influences of habit that cling to animality. Yet he cannot resign himself to the fateful influences of sensual attractions. He has to pursue of life worthy of his nobler impulses also. Accordingly he is engaged in a wrestle between his animal nature and spiritual nature with a view to gain mastery over his raw impulses. *Vacanakaras* have devoted more than half of their *vacanas* to give expression to the infinite nuances of man's struggling endeavour in this direction. The vivid agony of this struggling soul of man in all its ramifications is typical of all religious aspirants. Only those who have tried this journey to the source of all harmony can appreciate the beauty of this picturesquely described struggle. Accordingly the *saranas* have conceived man's nature as in the process of making in accordance with the exercise of his freedom of choice in the light of the regulative ideal aims. In this conception of man there is always the possibility of transcending his sensuous animal nature and bending those animal energies to a nobler purpose through self-examination, self-discipline and self-knowledge. Further his freedom and responsibilities are balanced to harmonize with God's relation in the form of God's love for man and the world. At no stage in the growing fullness of man's experience God takes away man's freedom. As Basava says :

> "What means the worship of a man / whose body is not pure ?
> What means this fancy that the Lord / Is not munificient ?
> The mind bears witness to the mind / Is Father linga not enough ?
> As our mind is, so thy glory is; / This never fails." (646, V.B.)

Here the good or the evil of the soul is due to the freedom of choice exercised by the aspirant. This *vacana* emphasizes freedom as a real element in the life of the soul. Thus the reality of the soul is bound up with the reality of freedom. Accordingly in the *Virasaiva* cosmological scheme the nature and status of man is given the due place in relation to the rest of the elements. This element of freedom is too large to be put aside as misconstruction or illusion. To deny the reality of freedom, therefore, is to dismiss the soul as an illusory unreal appearance, which would make the religious endeavor meaningless nonsense. Therefore the *Virasaiva Vacanakaras* in accordance with their relational view of things in process hold that freedom is a real element in the growth of man and the universe.

Accordingly as you feel, think and do in all your deepest sincere faith, so you become. This process of man's growth is best described in the multidimensional cumulative and creative growth of man's experience called *satsthala marga.* This *satsthala marga* gives a dynamic account of man and his goal in this world by taking note of what man is, ought to be and can be. It is an account not only satisfying to the logical intellect but also a living embodiment flowering into a dynamic force in the actuality of inner life. Here what one has learnt through the instructions from the teacher, self-study, reflection, and has come to settle upon his convictions has a matching expression in conduct. Thought and action are fused. Philosophy becomes a way of life in so far as conduct is a living translation of those principles into practice. It is this living practice, which saves philosophy from degenerating into futile intellectual hair-splitting exercise. *Tattavadarshana* becomes *Tattvanubhava;* i.e. philosophy and religion become fused.

The doctrine of *Satsthala* is a description of man's growing perfection culminating in the unitive experience and God becoming immanent in each growing experience appropriately to the intensity and complexity of each such experience. It is the story of man's spiritual effort starting from an awareness of one's own *bhavaroga,* curing and cleansing it, and then developing into the fullness of harmonized ineffable experience of peace. It is only for purposes of the convenience of formulating a doctrine that the aspirant's journey is factorized in very broad terms as six, or hundred and one, and so on stages. This is how the career of the aspiring man into growing perfection can be described in general terms. But strictly speaking each such progressive perfection on the part of man varies according to the individual differences and the level of intensity on the part of such aspirants. Each man's struggle, self-knowledge and self-realization have their own nuances too deep to be articulated in general terms.

The *Vacanakaras* have prescribed a method of discipline of the activities and experiences whose depth of reach is an endless perfection of existence. That is, the *satsthala marga* is both the theory and practice of the *Vacanakara's* concept of the nature and goal of man's existence. If there is to be vigorous religious conduct it must be well founded on the metaphysical principles.

If metaphysics is not to degenerate into a dry discussion, a dry polemical exercise, and give us satisfaction it must fuse with the conduct of life. Both these are achieved in *satsthala. Satsthala marga,* therefore, is a living handbook for man's spiritual journey from raw individuality into integral spiritual personality. This temporal world is taken as an experimental laboratory for the study of spiritual phenomena under controlled conditions. The *Vacanakaras* affirm and accept the reality of the world and its positive contribution to the development of man's all-round growth. The *Vacanakaras* do not reject any of the elements, which this temporal world offers (presents). But they always caution the aspirant about the scope and limitations of all such elements, which he may absorb according to his vision of greatness.

The various organs of man's experience have an outward going tendency. The first step must be to turn man's attention to look inward. This cannot happen until and unless man transcends the ephemerality of passing things and satisfactions, and develops a taste for permanency of life's satisfactions. When this happens man comes to realize that he was too much sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of worldliness or, *bhavaroga,* as the *saranas* would call it. This sort of awareness is called *Samsaraheya sthala,* where the religious aspirant's plight is compared to that of a frog under the shadow of the serpent. In this context the apsirant tells God that it is an insult to the master if he cannot succeed in the struggle and that God should make him fight and win in the battles of life. As Basava says :

> ''If the warrior runs away, / His master bears the shame :
> You make me fight and win; / you make me fight and win,
> O Kudala Sangama Lord, / By clearing all I am and have
> Of fraud !'' (299, V.B.)

This *Vacana* clearly shows that there is inner spiritual agony in the life of the religious aspirant and yet the goal has become fixed and the road to that goal has also become clear. Having been in this world the aspirant's determination to conquer the goal is strengthened and, in this task of spiritual life, man seeks God's help and grace as a necessity. In this phase of development the aspirant likens his position to that of a wife readily waiting for the loving union of her husband, as both Basava (269, V.B.) and Akka Mahadevi (46, V.A.) have expressed it.

In these *Vacanas* the aspirant identifies himself as a well-dressed beautiful wife eagerly waiting and craving for union with the husband. Similarly the spiritual pilgrim wearing the saintly dress eagerly waited and sought God's grace in the manner of a chaste wife seeking to serve her Lord. If the aspirant, in the manner of a wife, did not receive love from the Lord, it is because, he confesses, there is something wrong in him. Why should a husband who once loved the wife be turned away from his love of wife on another occasion if it were not for some fault in the wife ? The aspirant attributes this failure of love to a defect in himself. Therefore he further comes to have a strengthened determination to attain fitness or deservingness to become a wife who receives her husband's love in an unhindrerd ceaseless manner. In accordance with his temperament the intensity of loving devotion shapes itself into different ways of expression depending upon the philosophy of his life. In this context the *Vacanakaras* along side of the philosophy of *satsthala* have devised an eight-fold protection, called *astavarana,* for fortifying the spiritual journey.

Every cell of such aspirant's personality does its best in the direction of attaining union or entry into God's life. In other words the animal personality progressively transforms itself into the spiritual personality of man. The aspirant enthusiastically promises to himself : ''What I'd love most to do is burst Thy belly and enter it !'' (486, V.B.) God, on the other hand, is always in need of taking into himself all realized values in existence. As Basava says :

> ''Devotion was verily the Ground on which the Preceptor sprouted. Into the leaf called God. And on that leaf there blossomed the flower of Reason, which grew into the Nut of Right Conduct. It then ripened itself into fullness of Personality, (in its

> own course). When this ripened fruit of Personality was about to fall, being detached from its stalk, The Lord of Unity at the Meeting of Rivers (of life) grabbed at it crying - "I need it !" (527, V.B.A free rendering).

Man's raw emotional energies are to be cleansed by the disciplined intellectual enlightenment and purified in the direction of progressively enriched experience called *linganga samarasya.*

Accordingly the *Vacanakaras* have distinguished man's progressive passage from animal personality into spiritual personality as involving *bhaktasthala, maheshwarasthala, prasadisthala, pranalingisthala, saranasthala* and *aikyasthala.* I will now give an account of *satsthala* in specific terms, sketchy in nature but with minimum of technicalities.

Satsthala is an art and theory of the internal life of man. It affirms the reality of man, world and God in terms of a relational structure. Every experience is cumulative and creative in its nature. It accepts everything that life in this world offers. But it tries to know the limitations and scope of those elements without rejecting them. It tries to give every element its due place and proportion in the scheme of the aspirant's life. It tries to transcend the limitations by appropriating what all is offered and relevant.

In the *bhaktasthala* man's extrovert nature is restrained through self-control and firm faith in the Great. It is not a blind faith. It arises as a result of pure heart, which knows no crookedness. As such the aspirant comes to know the power of his psychic eros. *Vacanakaras* have called such an aspirant by the technical name, *anga.* As Devaradasemayya says :

> "Consciousness in oneself must manifest in oneself; Otherwise, can it manifest elsewhere ? It was in itself; and when it became manifest, the self-awareness born from it is indescribable, O Lord Ramanatha !" (108, *Devaradasemayyana Vacanagalu*. Trans. by Dr. N.G. Mahadevappa).

This *Vacana* shows how the aspirant has to awaken in himself the awareness of an ideal or what he ought to be. It also shows that the aspirant must clearly have the idea of the means to realize that ideal. In this phase the aspirant develops certain disinclination towards the worldly things. This does not mean the rejection of the world. He assigns to them their due places in the scheme of life. A certain discontent with what is, is inevitable if we are to realize the ideal in which we have faith and devotion. This is so by reason of the fact that man craves for peace and contentment. This kind of divine discontent, characteristic of *Samsaraheya sthala*, is the root of the aspirant's next phase of progressive development. As Basava says :

"Look how the ocean of this world swells and flings itself / Upon my face ! Tell me, is it breast-high ? / Tell me, is it knee-high ? And when it comes As high as the head, / What shall I say, O Lord ? Lord, O Lord, list to my distress ! / What shall I do now, Lord Kudala Sangama?" (8, V.B.)

Here the aspirant does not run away from the world but becomes aware of its scope and limitations and then transcends them, in and through living well in this world which he has accepted as real. Those who earn merit here, earn also there. The aspirant abandons the sense of pride and ostentation. In this phase he calls in the aid of a teacher who imparts *isthalinga* or God, relevant and necessary for his spiritual progress. The aspirant wears it on his body to be constantly in touch with his guiding ideal or God. The deepening of this faith in, and devotion to God is the characteristic of the next phase of development in the aspirant's life. It is called *maheshwarasthala.*

In the *maheshwara* phase of development the element of will illuminated by intellectual feelings attains predominance. Its fundamental characteristic is firm devotion, constant in tone and temper. Unwavering loyal and loving devotion arises due to the marriage of thought and action. It is characterized by resoluteness of purpose, courage and adventure. The aspirant develops into a man of firm character with certain stubbornness in contending for his chosen purpose. Basava vividly describes this in the following words :

> "The sarana must have the constancy to say,
> 'I will not have another's wealth',

The sarana must have the constancy to say, 'I will not have another's wife', The sarana must have the constancy to say, 'I will not have another God' The sarana must have the constancy to say, 'Linga and Jangama are one', The sarana must have the constancy to say, 'Prasada is the truth',

Lord Kudala Sangama disdains such men as have no constancy". (676, V.B.)

Or as Akka Mahadevi puts it :

> "If spark has kindled spark,
> I say it quenched my hunger and my thirst,
> If a cloud comes tearing down, I say its water pouring for my bath.
> Should a mountain fall, on me, I say its flowers showering down,

> Should my head break and drop, I say my life is offered unto
> Thee, O Cenna Mallikarjuna Lord !" (248, V.A.)

So deep is his loyalty and devotion to the goal that petty anxieties and worries of ordinary life do not touch him. In the battlefield of inner life there are hard decisions to be taken in regard to convictions and the ultimate goal of man. They brook, drift and evade no longer. This is so because a man caught in the tempest of fashionable temptations will not be able to achieve anything worthwhile. It is the dogged that does it. As Basava says :

> " ... If you persist in what you have begun Our Lord Kudala Sangama
> Will lead you to your goal; if not, He'll sink you in midstream !" (220, V.B.)

Any half-hearted execution of our task takes us nowhere. It is only our effort penetrated through and through with unflinching sincerity that can carry through to our logical end. This is the true core of our final good - individual and social. The aspirant is undaunted in facing and overcoming the hindrances and obstacles.

In these two phases the goal of the aspirant's journey becomes fixed and he traverses his path undaunted by difficulties. In this honesty of his effort he calls in the aid of *isthalinga* or particular providence for particular (occasion) experiences - *acharalinga* relevant to *bhakta* phase, *gurulinga* relevant to *maheshwara* phase. The aspect of God entering this *bhakta* experience is called *acharalinga*, and the aspect of God relevant to *mahesha* stage of experience is called *gurulinga*. There is perfect match between thought and action. But the dynamics of upward spiritual movement enters the next phase of *prasadisthala*.

It is the impulse towards the best that drives man's psychic eros in search of dynamic perfections absorbing what all is offered and relevant. The aspirant begins to see everything in its proper perspective. His firm faith and loyal devotion effortlessly transform themselves into the natural disposition in the aspirant's character formation. His faith and devotion in their upward march acquire the characteristics of constancy, diligence. As a result the stresses and strains, and internal agonies of the aspirant come to a rest and his faith and feelings of stubbornness in devotion become tempered by softness. Such softness and diligence produce feelings of pleasing graciousness in this *prasadi* phase of the aspirant's character. In this *prasadi* phase, though the aspirant is constantly engaged in life's activities on demand, what characterizes this phase is that he accepts it as a gracious gift of God. No one can escape action. No action, no achievement of any kind and yet in this *prasadi* phase the action is untouched by the selfish-sense of pride. As Basava says :

> "By due observances without a heart they dig their graves.
> By offerings without sincerity they dig their graves.
> If their heart goes with what they do or give,
> Our Lord Kudala Sangama shall take them to his heart" (233, V.B.)

This *Vacana* prescribes the tone and the temper with which the aspirant must perform actions, which will draw in God into his life. In the very next breath the aspirant is warned to keep a watchful eye on the sense of pride raising its head in performing such actions. As Basava says :

> "If but the thought of doing well Flashes into mind,
> God's laughter haunts me like bell down the wind !

The surest way is not to say : The Godhead never heeds
The vaunted deeds it's only when I find No trace within my mind -
No conscious thought Of what I've wrought. Then only shall He hear
And grace my prayer !'' (234, V.B.)

If only the aspirant can get rid of this ruinous egoism he knows with confidence and trust that God will bestow upon him whatever is asked. Though act you must, you must know how to act. Whatever comes to him, the aspirant in the *prasadi* phase takes it as the loving gift of God. As Basava says :

''... The consecrated body, come to gratify Lord Kudala Sangama,
Must not suffer''. (774, V.B.)

Thus everything must be accepted in the spirit of *prasada* or the pleasing graciousness of God. Whatever comes to him, the *prasadi* first offers it to God and then enjoys it as a gift of God. This is one aspect of the *prasadi's* experience. The other aspect consists in offering himself to his God called *Sivalinga.*

The aspirant being in this phase of *prasadi* experience still continues his upward development in the next phase called *pranalingi sthala.* In the *bhakta* and *mahesha* phase God is given to the aspirant as *isthalinga*- a symbol to bring to our awareness God-consciousness. In the *prasadi* phase of experience the whole universe is taken to be the gracious gift of God and offer himself to God in this experience. The next order of experience is worship of *pranalinga.* Here the aspirant adores and worships God, called *pranalingi,* in the intimacy of his immediate experience. As a Vacanakara puts it : "Since the prana was established in Linga, and Linga in prana, it came to be called pranalinga". Allamprabhu puts it thus :

"On the tip of my mind I have seen with amaze a bodiless form; in the inmost recesses of my soul I have seen with amaze Allayya, Guheswara's own become one with *animisa.*" (205, V.P, unpublished, Trans. by Menezes & Angadi.)

Here the *linga* is experienced in the intimacy of inner and outer life of the aspirant. Here God is sustained on the tip of mind's singleness of concentration. God is held in the eye of meditation. The aspirant is face to face with his God. In this phase the innumerable potentialities of the soul's psychic eros are kindled. All such psychic powers can only be experienced in the immediacy of direct experience connected with them. This is the height to which the practice of yogic experience can take us. The *pranalingi* exclaims :

> "When I try to see you on my palm, you are seen at the tip of my eyes ! What is this magic of yours ! When I try to see you at the tip-off my eyes, you are seen on the tip of my mind ! What is this magic of yours ! When I try to see you at the tip of my mind, you are seen in my soul ! What is this magic of yours !" (Translated by Dr. N.G. Mahadevappa).

In this *Vacana* the *isthalinga* shades off into *pranalinga,* which in turn shades off into *bhavalinga* - all of which, in the end, are transformed as *sarvangalinga.* These are the aspects of God experienced in particular relevance to the various phases of the aspirant's inner development. This *(pranalingi)* phase occupies middle position in the spiritual development of the aspirant. It develops on the foundations of faith and devotion of the *bhakta* and *maheshwara* phases of experience, proceeds from the *prasadi* phase towards the path of knowledge, and in the *pranalingi* phase there is the predominance of immediacy and intimacy of direct experience. Here the aspirant, in his upward search after God's grace, having acquired the grace of God turns inward in the *pranalingi* phase. This is the mystic experience, which the *Pranalingi* enjoys. It is called *anubhava,* properly applicable to the *pranalingi* phase of the aspirant's development. The value realized in this phase is called *anubhavabhakti.* Though *bhakti* or loving devotion is the core of the whole spiritual movement we find its expanded development from *shraddhabhakti* in bhakta experience through loyal devotion *(naishtikabhakti)* of mahesha phase, *avadhanabhakti* of *prasadi* phase, *anubhavabhakti* of the pranalingi phase, *anandabhakti* of the *sarana* phase to *samarasa bhakti* of the aikya phase called *linganga samarasya.*

Sarana and *aikya* phases are the final phases in the aspirant's spiritual progress. These correspond to what Western aspirants call unitive love. In this phase the aspirant is in sight of his final goal and enjoys the bliss of that communion or mutual absorption.

In the *Sarana* phase the aspirant craves to surrender everything of his to God. God in this function is called *bhavalinga,* and enjoys bliss in this experience of surrender. The aspirant does not wish to keep all this bliss to himself but desires that it should help realize the good of all creatures. The *sarana* offers himself in the service of God's work. What all he does takes the form of God's worship. As Basava says :

"Look you, the saranas sleep is telling of beads;
It's sivaratri when he wakes and sits;
Wherever he treads is holy ground;
And Siva doctrine whatever he speaks;
The body of Kudala Sanga's sarana is very abode of
Siva !" (872, V.B.)

In this way the *Vacanakaras* have held that what all the *Saranas* have enjoyed, it is an offering to God; what all they have tasted, it is *prasada;* what all the *sarana* has known, it is ultimate reality; what all he has forgotten is ultimate happiness; what all they have uttered is the principle of God called *Siva.* In this phase the *sarana* thinks that he is a faithful wife and that God is her Lord. The relation between them is expressed in the phrase, *sarana sati linga pati,* meaning offering in love and surrender to that whose greatness inspires obedient love.

The final phase of this dynamic progress in spiritual life is called *aikya sthala.* In this phase the aspirant enjoys infinite bliss in the sight of his God, and in his union, enjoys unsurpassed bliss. Basava described this phase of experience in the following words :

"Infinite the bliss of seeing Thee, infinite the bliss of loving Thee.
Gaze at Thee, with all my million hairs transformed to eyes !
O Kudala Sangama Lord, Gazing and gazing at Thee,
As love was born in my heart, The many marks of love stood out !". (490, V.B.)
"What boots in your Linga worshipping Unless you have common love, A common art, a common joy?
What boots in your Linga-worshipping Unless, by

worship of Lord Kudala Sangama you merge in Him
as stream in stream ?'' (929, V.B.)
''I was greater than the greatest that there is in the grand Absolute, sublimely great. How can I tell the way the word
That I'm within the lofty light
Of Lord Kudala Sangama was turned to silentness?'' (956, V.B.)

These *Vacanas* bring out the literal meaning and significance of man's final goal of life called *linganga sumarasya.* It is pointed out that in this phase of spiritual experience the aspirant and his Lord enter into each other, enjoy orgasm on equal terms in their mutual absorption and equally enjoy happiness in the company of each other. Of what use is the worship of God (The Lord of unity at the meeting of Rivers of Life) if all this cannot be achieved ? This phase of experience is best conceived in terms of dynamic union expressed in the metaphor of stream running into stream. Further it is pointed out that in their union each excels the other in greatness and that the aspirant exists in the great light's light called *Kudala Sangama Deva* where silence is language. The various metaphors in terms of which this phase of experience is expressed clearly show that *linganga samarasya* is an open-ended experience where the aspirant and his God recognize and respect each other, are absorbed into each other, enjoy each other, flow into each other in the manner of river running into river. But this experience is too bright to be articulated in words. Language halts behind intuition, (cf. 956, V.B.)

This is an account of how the raw individuality of man is transformed into the spiritual personality of the aspiring man, in the most general terms divested of avoidable technicalities. In the philosophy of *satsthala* a wholesome man has to maintain a balance between extroversion and introversion. In the phase of raw individuality the world is too much with the overbusy practical minded man of the world. Such a man is lost in the strife and confusions and tensions of the temporal world. None of such persons escape petty worries, petty vanities and controversies. Allamaprabhu says :

> ''Those puffed with pride because they know the alphabet, cannot render their account ! Learning a verbal Advaita from instructions given by the guru and elders, they argue; but know not of what is going on; know nothing of devotion; nothing of deliverance, nor of union; and yet, they go on arguing all the same ! They have made, O Guheswara, a poor bargain in the end.'' (69, V.P, Trans. By Menezes and Angadi, Unpublished)

Such men are persistently called off and distracted by a multitude of external sophistications and artificialities of opportunistic worldly wisdom. They drift into a life of ease or comforts. The *Vacanakaras* have called this, *bhavaroga* or the spiritual disease of too much worldliness. The remedy is to make them introverted so as to enable them to have depth and inwardness. A wise feeding of their souls with a proper perspective and sense of values nourishes the gradual maturity of their inner life. What it all comes to is this : The personal religion of a *sarana* must be Theo-centric. As their inner life matures there is the quickening of their religious sensitiveness, which makes them live more and more intensely towards God. A sense of rich totality inspires and feeds their spiritual adventures into mystic depths. In the end the religious aspirant stands in openness of innocence, stripped of all wordily knots, in his communion with God. It is in this solitariness of inner life that the religious aspirant obtains material for the spiritualization of outward religious life. In other words the integration of the whole life, and not separation of devotion from action, ought to be the aspirant's ascetic goal. Every persuasive religion promotes the gentle penetration of every activity of man with spiritual values. It comes always and only from a very pure, childlike and continuous inner life of sincerity, devotion and prayer. The health and balance of man's life will depend upon the due proportion in it, of introversion and extroversion.

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Short forms used :

1. V.B. - Vacanas of Basavanna
2. V.A. - Vacanas of Akkamahadevi
3. V.P. - Vacanas of Prabhudevaru

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(Continued from last issue)

Ramchandra to Gurudev

A Pilgrim's Progress

[Biography of Gurudeo Ranade]

By 1920, Gurudev had realised God for himself or in his words... "The Bible says that God created man to his image, and we may say man is paying back the debt by creating God in his...." (BG 62).

But then, this was not all. As for Kabir, so for Gurudev "God in his graciouness gave me mandate and the power to save some at least, and thus to bring light in the life of some..." (PGHL 262). Gurudev regards this apostleship and prophethood, as the very cope - stone of mystical life to be ever reached by man (PGHL - 191).

This was his spiritual status in 1920. One can only imagine the various spiritual conquests that were conferred on him till the end i.e. 1957.

Let us come back to the poem of Jagannathadasa and see relevant utterances These are ".. by the grace of my spiritual teacher, I became not merely the first among the intellectuals but also the first among the spirituals." "You gave me Vipulamati, 'plenty of wisdom', 'got me recongnized as a great philosopher by people who have gone through austerities', '*nipunanendeniside tapasigalingdali.* You conferred on me spiritual illumination and made me a saint. Is there any limit to the obligations which you have conferred on me?" says

Jagannathadasa to Gopaladasa, And finally, Jagannathadasa tells us in a spiritualo-socialistic mood, "It is not enough for you to confer the same obligations on me and to rid me of my sins and defects and faults; no you must confer the same obligations upon the society. Just as you have forgiven my sins and my defects, you must also forgive the sins of the whole of the society. It is only then that you are entitled to be called a great saint: *sakala prapannara salaha modadi,* 'please save with gladness all who surrender themselves to you.' With great gladness you should graciously confer you obligations upon those who seek your help."

God forefilled all his desires, about which he writes

"This indicates the forefulfilment of the desires of the saint by God. Before any desire arises in mind of the saint, it is already fulfilled by God. This question of the forefulfilment of desires is an ethical counterpart of the doctrine of forekonwledge in the epistemological sphere. James tells us in his "Will to Believe" "how God is the great expert, who can anticipate any moves of a novice in a game of chess, and thereby manipulates. His moves in such a manner that ultimate victory is gained for Himself. On the other hand; in the case of a forefulfilment, the events are so manipulated by God that the desires are fulfilled before they arise in a man's mind and victory is gained for the Saint. Greatness in the world may not be incompatible with greatness in the spiritual life. Even a Vice Chancellor's Chair may not be incompatible with the vision of a spiritual form." The chair of the Vice chancellor at Allhabad University was decorated by Gurudev.

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Obituary

II Shri Sadguru Samartha II

Smt. Vijaya Apte
(Shakutai)

Poojya Shri Gurudev Ranade is revered and respected around the world as a Philosopher Saint. He is recognised as an authority in field of philosophy & spirituality. His only daughter, Shrimati Vijaya V. Apte alias Shakuntala Ranade, was my mother. Recently, on Friday, 14th of October 2005, she was called to take her place in the heavenly abode. Her pure & pious life, her simple elegance, natural grace, generous nature, a very giving & forgiving disposition and above all a very loving & welcoming smile, made her a unique personality. She had successfully passed her masters in Philosophy under her renowned father yet she was very unassuming. She was also a daughter-in-law of a well known wealthy Sardar family from Gwalior, but she was as if unaware of it. Goddess of education & Goddess of wealth, Saraswati & Lakshmi, were blessing her, yet like her noted father she had no unction about it.

Shakuntala's mother's family, Vaidya, hailed from Islampur, dist. Sangli. Shakuntala was born in Islampur on 29th of January 1925. It also happens to be the date when Poojya Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj passed away (Shri Gurudev's Sadguru).

Poojya Gurudev Ranade was serving in Allahabad

University since 1928, as a professor, then Head of the Department of Philosophy, then Dean of faculty of Arts and retired as the Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University. Naturally, Shakuntala, fondly known as Shakutai, did all her schooling and college education in Allahabad University. She finished her M.A. with Philosophy following her revered father's Path. She was married to Shri Vishwanathrao Apte, the son of Raoraja Shri Madhavrao Apte, Lt. Col. and a reputed veternarian at the court of Rajah of·Gwalior. Like father, the son was also a very pious, sincere, sacrificing & a promising young man. Shri Gurudev intaitively saw all these qualities in him & selected a proper match for his daughter. After marriage Shakuntala, now Vijaya Apte, served as a Professor of Philosophy at Girl's College in Gwalior. Later, Vijaya moved from Gwalior to Mumbai (then Bombay) and then to Pune, with Vishwanathrao & family. While being a mother of three children, Nandini, Deepak & Jyoti and also performing duties as a house-wife, Shakutai always paid long visits with Shri Gurudev & Matoshri Kakusaheb Ranade. Her visits were always a delight to Shri Gurudev and provided a welcome change to Matoshri Kakusaheb.

After Shri Gurudev passed away in 1957, she took a very critical & creative role in building the Samadhi Mandir in Nimbal, establishing Shri Gurudev Ranade Dnyana Dhama High School in Nimbal and later founding Shri Gurudev Ranade Samadhi Trust in Nimbal. While Matoshri Kakusaheb was the driving force behind these gigantic projects, Shakutai always remained an artist behind the stage.

From 1967 to 1993 she successfully published ''Satsang'', a quarterly, representing Nimbal Ashram. She published several articles in 'Satsang', 'Pathway to God'' (quarterly from Belgaum) & Allahabad Quarterly. Her book, "Jaisi Ganga Vahe" (published in 1995) is an excellent collection of memories in Marathi, depicting her life with noted father, Shri Gurudev Ranade and an extra ordinary mother. Her intimate, fond and touching accounts of her unusual life with Shri Gurudev were widely appreciated. She also wrote a brief history of 'Nimbargi Sampradaya'' called "Dhanya ha Sadguru Mahima". After Shrimati Kakusaheb Ranade passed away in 1982, she very ably served as a founder member & Trustee of Shri Gurudev Ranade Ashram Nimbal. Shakutai's last book, "Triveni Sangam" was a tribute to a dedicated and determined life her mother spent in the service of her father, Shri Gurudev ! After the publication of this last book, in August 2005, she felt that she had expressed her indebtedness to her parents and so her mission in life was completed.

Her spiritual life began when she was 5 years old. Shri Shivalingavva Akka, Shri Gurudev's spiritual sister and one of the great saints in the Sampradaya of Nimbargi, imparted the Divine Name to little Shakuntala, in the presence of Shri Gurudev & Matoshri Kakusaheb. According to his humble nature, Shri Gurudev not only witnessed and blessed the initiation but he, as if, imparted the Divine Name, thru Shri Shivalingavva Akka. Shakutai in return considered and revered them as her Sadguru.

With continuous namasmaran, great devotional attitude and constant awareness of the Grace of Almighty, she was able to fulfill her promise made to her Sadguru. She was able to reach such heights in spirituality which few people can; yet her unassuming nature concealed it easily. She was revered by many yet she was humble because she knew that she was a mere servant to the great Guru.

She was a wife, mother, daughter-in-law, daughter and assumed many roles in life but first & foremost, she remained a daughter to her great father and Sadguru, Shri Gurudev Ranade ! That role was the most important role in her life and it was a guiding force for all her activities. She may be anywhere in the world and may be doing any activity that she was called for, her awareness of her role as the daughter and a staunch disciple of Shri Gurudev never faded away. It was a privileged life on one hand and a very precarious role on the other. By the Grace of Sadguru she walked that "क्षुरस्यधारा" very gracefully and successfully. And the last breath of her life was in the rememberance of 'Sadguru' and the 'Naam'.

I am privileged to be born as the daughter of Shakutai & Grand daughter of Shri Gurudev Ranade. I must have done something good in my last life. I pray to Shri Gurudev that his Divine life and my mother's & Grand-mother's sacrificing ideal lives will always guide us, so we can enrich our lives with devotional attitude and become worthy to be called as grand children of Shri Gurudev & children of Shakutai.

- Mrs. Nandini Sathye

U.S.A

God is near to him whose heart is mellowed by the love of God. Shri Maharaj used to say that complete Self surrender enables a man to appropriate God and not counting beads of rosary many times over. What is wanted is the inner quality of the heart.

- Gurudeo Ranade

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